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BARNADISTON

A Tale of the Seventeenth Century.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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W. J.

PREFACE.

IN offering the following work to the public the Author is sensible he must calculate greatly upon its indulgence. It teemeth with faults, and possesseth not, he fears, many redeeming qualities. If any excuse shall be allowable, he may be permitted to say, it is his first attempt in this way : the avocations of a military life, the roar and wit of the mess-table, or the dull routine of garrison or colonial service, (in which

he regrets to have passed any of his days,) are little suited to the encouragement of literary occupations; but being freed from military trappings and trammels, the Author was, perhaps somewhat too hastily, induced to indulge the bias of his mind, in the composition of a tale, taken from the traditionary remembrances which the war of the great rebellion hath bequeathed from sire to son, in almost every town and lone village of our island home.

The family of Barnadiston, from which the title of these pages is taken, were, at one period, of great consideration in the borders of Essex and Suffolk. And if our annals have been written true, the castle of Barnadiston, which once stood on the banks of the little streamlet, the Stour, on the steep above the village of Kedington, in the county of Suffolk, was in days of yore a mighty keep, one of those feudal

fortalices which fell, when Charles fell from his throne. It was in the neighbourhood of that sequestered valley, once the domains of the Lords of Banson, that the Author passed his earlier and happier days; and was compelled by fortune to desert those peaceful abodes, and wear a useless brand, when war's trumpet had ceased to blow, and the soldier became no more than the privileged, gaily tricked, fantastically arrayed idler. The army possesses but few charms for a person in peaceable times, who hath not overwhelming influence, some share of the wealth of Cræsus, and a natural proneness to "much ado about nothing." The ear-piercing fife, and spirit-stirring drum, the stiff parade, its blank and empty forms, are not congenial with all spirits;—they were not so with the Author: he quitted the profession of arms with the highest esteem for many of its

members, (among whom he will ever be proud to rank many personal friends,) with an utter detestation of the unfair and invidious system pursued in the promotion of officers, entirely unentitled, either by qualifications or services, to be preferred before their brethren—owing their elevation purely to the accident of birth, of wealth, or parliamentary influence. The Author would not in any way have alluded to his military apprenticeship, were it not in some measure in extenuation of the many defects of the Work he now offers to the public, who will perhaps judge somewhat leniently of the production of one whose pursuits have not been calculated to promote success in imaginative composition. The sword and the pen have indeed sometimes been felicitously wielded by the same hand; but such instances are rare; and the critic is not unfrequently considerably

sparing to those of the sword, who appear in the arena of literature, with less advantage than other competitors. The Author has but to hope some such consideration will be bestowed on himself; and with that impression, he invites his reader to the perusal of the following
'Work.

BARNADISTON.

CHAPTER I.

Of olden days I tell,—when civil broil
Convulsed our island home ; when proud
Baronial fortalices fell, and many a famous
Name was heard no more ; and the loud trump
Of war startled the hallowed fane, the busy,
Stirring town, and the poor, peaceful cottage of the
vale.

ANONYMOUS.

BORN of high parentage, and linked by the ties
of consanguinity with the noblest families of
the land, Albert Barnadiston was reared by his
widowed mother with all the affection, zealous

solicitude, and matronly pride that might well beseeem the sole surviving scion of a race, who had long held the wide domains, and once formidable turrets of Barnadiston Castle, which had been granted by the Conqueror to the ancestor and founder of the name, in reward of signal services performed in the decisive field of Hastings.

From his earliest infancy, the young Albert had been taught to regard with enthusiastic admiration the glorious feats of his ancestors, who had successively followed their native princes to the Holy Land, had bled in the far-famed fields of Cressy and Agincourt, and subsequently had shared and suffered the reverses incidental to the dubious war of the roses, where the Barnadiston surmounted his battle pennon with the pale flower,—fit emblem of the mournful triumphs of the *conquerors* over their *conquered* countrymen. Amidst the din of combat, too, in the arduous and hard-fought fight of Bosworth, the war-cry of the Barnadiston was

carried into the centre of the desperate ring of warriors who fought with determined energy around the person of the indomitable Richard ; and a tradition was carefully preserved in the family, that the spear of their ancestor had drunk the life-blood of the fierce usurper.*

To a young and sensitive mind, naturally proud, and nursed by the exaggerated fictions of the old domestics, who fed with wondrous tales the curiosity of their young lord, Albert Barnadiston early acquired a strong desire for distinction, and excellence in arms. The lady-mother of Albert felt assured that the blood of his race was a sure guarantee of his skill in all knightly exercises ; but the love of knowledge, and the cultivation of the mind, were objects

* The white rose, the emblem of the House of York, may seem inapplicable to an opponent of Richard ; but it must be remembered, that many of the most devoted partizans of York, disgusted with the tyranny and usurpation of Richard, joined the standard of the Earl of Richmond.

too little regarded, by the generality of England's noble blood, in those rude days, when science had not long touched with her magic wand our favoured soil, where she has since been fostered with our liberties; but was yet too much confined to the charmed and classic land and language of Italy, where the mighty spirits of a Dante, a Tasso, a Galileo, a Machiavel, a Raphael, and a Buonarotti, had conjured her from her slumbers amidst the darkness of ages, or from the useless and mouldering solitude of the cloisters. One mighty genius, whose immortality can perish only with the tongue of his native land, had indeed arisen among us, and adorned the Elizabethan era; but the mass of the English nation was not yet emerged from general ignorance, and it was not then considered absolutely necessary to be conversant with the *instructive* lore of those sages who had *enlightened* mankind, and who yet "rule our spirits from their urns."

When Lord Barnadiston, the father of

young Albert was travelling through Italy in early life, (a tour in those days confined to the illustrious and noble of our land, with few exceptions,) in his sojourn at Venice, which was held, and justly held, by chivalric Europe, to be the seat of politeness, of arts, of commerce, and of the science of government—queen of the sea, and the bulwark of the Christian world,—he was entertained with profuse hospitality in the palace of Ludovico Morosini, of the blood of the conqueror of the Morea: he there became acquainted, and cultivated a strict friendship, with a Florentine, who had been engaged in the tumultuous and bloody factions of his native city, and having unfortunately, in a nocturnal skirmish, met and slain the brother of his betrothed mistress, he fled with horror from the scene of the frightful tragedy; and forswearing the trade of arms, and the ambition of distinction, he kneeled at the sacred altar, a disciple of Loyola, and a suppliant to a merciful God for forgiveness of his crime. Father Gaspardo

was yet in the prime of life ; but the fierce passions and fire of his youth were no longer to be traced on his proud but subdued brow, which was deeply engraven with the lines of thought ; though a close observer might have espied, in his hollow cheek, and in the fire of his deep grey eye, the wrack of soul, and the scathing spirit, subdued but scarce controlled. There was a calmness in his mien, which the authoritative outline of his features belied ; though shaded by the deceitful cowl, the lofty forehead, the high, prominent nose, and the beautiful scorn of the upper lip, all lighted up by the intelligence of the commanding eye, bespoke more the warrior of the old Roman blood, than the holy priest ; and his firm and measured step seemed more meet to marshal embattled armies on the dusty field, than to tread the sounding solitude of the cloisters. Though Father Gaspardo was possessed of the all-powerful mind, cultivated talents, and schooled habits of his dangerous brotherhood, he possessed them

only, with his persuasive powers and deep-toned, musical voice, to impart those truths and precepts that should improve mankind, and contribute to the happiness of his fellow-beings. In Lord Barnadiston he found a high and noble foreigner, who loved to listen to his powerful eloquence in the cause of wisdom, and the heart of the Jesuit opened and warmed to the frank and sensible Englishman, as he observed his manly countenance vary with unrepressed emotions, while he related the moving tales of his divided city, his fatal rencontre, his blighted love and ceaseless remorse. Each day added to the partiality which the English lord felt for Gaspardo, and since the Barnadiston had never fallen away from the worship of his fathers, but held with pride and steadfastness to the faith which his countrymen had abandoned, following the example of their lustful and capricious king, he prevailed with the enlightened Jesuit to return with him to England, and to pass the remainder of his days in honoured retire-

ment amidst the time-worn cloisters of Kedington Priory, a dependence of the Lords of Banson.

Years had passed away, and in the happiness of a social life, blessed in the devoted love of an affectionate and beautiful wife, and in the enjoyment of the intellectual conversation of the instructive Gaspardo, Lord Barnadiston was honoured among his compeers, and usefully and gratefully employed in the diffusion of comfort and happiness among his numerous and attached retainers, and in the strict and impartial administration of justice, when he was called away, in the prime of age, by a sudden summons to another, and, let us hope, to a happier world.

Deep was the affliction of the noble and youthful Lady Barnadiston at the bereavement of her honoured and much-loved lord ; and the bosom of the fair mother heaved with anxious tenderness when she thought upon the important charge of rearing the sole pledge of her

love, and the last representative of an ancient and untainted name. While she remarked with sorrowing mournfulness, and maternal solicitude, the playful archness, and juvenile graces of the prattling Albert, her heart was buoyed up by the pleasing anticipation of watching the budding virtues of her beauteous son; and in order that he might early and successfully acquire the lessons of wisdom and honour, she submitted him entirely to the superior instruction and superintendence of Father Gaspardo, who, in tribute to the memory of the sire, quitted the peaceful precincts of Kedington Priory, and devoted himself completely to the education of his promising son.

Perfectly satisfied that she had provided, in the effective and friendly supervision of Father Gaspardo, an unequalled director of the mind of her son, the Lady Barnadiston committed to Antony Conyers, the faithful esquire and companion of her honoured husband, the charge to instruct Albert in all manly exercises, and ac-

complishments of knightly chivalry, usual to the high-born youth of the time. Though stricken in years, the robust frame of the stout squire was yet unimpaired, and showed, from his upright carriage and gallant step, the fearless hardihood and active courage of his former youth. Loud and high would he laugh, and his sparkling eye would beam with joy, when, in the exercise of darting the javelin, careering with the lance, and bending the stubborn bow, he would exult in the surpassing excellence of his youthful pupil; but it was in the management of the foaming horse that the pride of old Conyers would be excited; and the fire of his eye would be kindled, when his young lord, locking his hand in the mane of his snorting courser, would spring from the verdant turf at one bound; and, sitting with ease and erect in the saddle, unstirrupped, would turn his armed heel to the flank of the startling charger, and run him at full speed through all the passages of the manège, dart from the barriers, check in

mid course, and, curvetting gracefully, ride round the ring with lowered spear. It was after returning from one of their exercises in the park, that Conyers related the pomp and pageantry of the tournaments he had witnessed in the court of Henry the Fourth of France ; where the English knights, with the vain and splendid Leicester, and his accomplished and elegant nephew, the pride of his country, and the admiration of courts, the high-minded and virtuous Philip Sydney, were entertained in kingly magnificence, and jousted with favourable success against all comers. “Ah,” continued the old squire, warming at the recollection of the spring of his nervous arm in his youthful days, “well do I remember that the heron crest of the Barnadiston floated for three days amidst the choicest chivalry, though many a gallant hawk and sovereign eagle swooped fiercely down upon it ; and when the squires entered the lists on foot, and the bright swords played round the beaming helmets, there was none which had

razed the heron plume of the squire of the Lord of Banson."

"And think you not, Conyers," said the excited Albert, "that my lady mother will soon send me forth to the court of my king, to vie in mimic feats of arms with the young and gallant nobles, who flock round the person of Charles, Prince of Wales?"

"That the high and noble lady will do so," said Conyers, "and send you forth among your compeers with the attendance and fair equipment of the heir of the Barnadiston, I cannot doubt: it is long since I have been at court; but I have heard that the king which Scotland hath given us, favoureth not the sheening of a lance, and that he keeps not up the state and pageantry, that were so much loved by the house of 'Tudor, by the caprice of bluff king Harry, and by the wise policy of the vain and virgin queen."

"I have heard, however, Conyers," said Albert, "that the Prince of Wales is a perfect

and noble cavalier, fair to behold, and of an extreme goodness, though melancholy withal, and not given to rude jests and boon companions: he is, too, a learned scholar and fair spoken."

"Well, for all I know, I see but little advantage in all this learning," said Conyers, "which I hear so much of now-a-days; it sharpens men's wits, may be, a little more, and they were often too sharp before for bad purposes; but, to my thinking, this general spread of learning, will end in making honest folks discontented with their present situations, and they won't be at rest, till they have brought round some sort of a change which may make a peasant a lord and a lord a peasant. For my part, I am too old to trouble myself about this new-fangled learning, that has seized on all the young heads: honest Antony Conyers wants no more than a bright day, a bold hawk, and a soaring heron, and he would not exchange places with Chancellor Bacon.

Albert smiled at the odd comparison of the old squire, saying archly, "It is strange, too, that one who can hold so lightly the value of learning in his own person, and can believe it fraught with such ruinous consequences, should have, with marked inconsistency and especial anxiety, secured to his son the benefits of a very excellent education. Let me tell you, Conyers, much as I love Wilfred, and admire his talents, I doubt if his superior spirit, and intellectual mind may not feel deeply wounded to lead the war charger, and to hold the stirrup, the hereditary duties of the squires of the lords of Banson; he is far more fitted to become a wise expounder of the law, or an ambitious and eloquent prelate."

"Odds blood!" exclaimed the astonished and simple-hearted squire, "Wilfred is certainly bookishly given, and I have not indeed spared any expense to cultivate the boy's mind, as his poor mother used to say, 'Anthony, though you are rude in manner, and without clerkly

skill, yet must we bring up Wilfred in the ways of wisdom, after the manner that Solomon has spoken of in the Proverbs. He that getteth wisdom, loveth his own soul; he that keepeth understanding, shall find good:" and on her death-bed, my good dame made me promise to fulfil her wishes and intentions. God knows I have endeavoured to do so, and I am thankful to the Lord for the blessing he has bestowed upon me, in a dutiful and affectionate son, of a goodly mien, and of a free and generous temper; but if I thought he could for a moment hesitate to follow the calling and honourable place of his father and ancestors near the person of the Barnadiston in the battle-field, or the chase, I would disown him, disinherit him, and whistle him off from my memory, like a hawk swooping down the wind. No, no," said the old man, much agitated, "Wilfred would never break his father's heart."

"My kind, good Conyers," said Albert, with emotion, laying his hand on the trembling arm

of the old squire, and looking up with surprise and sorrow at his quivering lip and watering eye, "I said not that Wilfred would condemn the calling and honoured service of his ancestors; but I think him meet for higher things. With his unusual acquirements, I would desire to see him employed in a nobler occupation than can befall the duties of the simple squire of a young lord. Wilfred is my companion and friend, and will accompany me to court too, as my Esquire, Conyers; but if I do not much mistake, the voice of fame will couple his name with deeds that shall make glad the heart of his worthy father. It is time, Conyers, our departure should be hastened, and I would have you urge your influence with my lady mother on this point. I burn with impatience to wear the knightly spur and belted glave; and by the prowess of my single arm to add to the honours of my line."

The excited Albert sprung from his champing steed, and waving an adieu to Conyers, he turned

into the hall of his fathers, where he paced impatiently in all the buoyancy of high-wrought spirits, till his armed tread waxed fainter and yet more faint on the marble pavement, as the gaze of the youth gradually became arrested by the pictured panoply of the by-gone ancestors of his race, who frowned round the vast hall of Barnadiston. There might be seen the companion of the Norman, with his formidable battle-axe and large moustache, and the red cross Templar, with his sun burnt features and solemn mien, in the white cloak and scarlet cross of his order; and the proud commanding look of the steel clad Baron, the dictator of Runnymede, who in his left hand held the invaluable charter of our liberties, while his right rested on the mighty sword that had rescued his country from despotic slavery, and had swept from his native soil the footsteps of Louis and his invading Frenchmen. There might be seen some young lord with long flowing ringlets, the courtier companion of the second and

courtly Edward, and some blooming beauty who had adorned the gay and festive court of his warrior son; while the more modern Spanish hat and feathers waved gracefully over the brows of the chiefs, who bore the pale white rose in their bannerets; and the spirited horse, and armed warrior, with his fatal spear, the hero of Bosworth.

Among the neighbouring nobility the high birth and beauty of the Lady Barnadiston had attracted many admirers; and powerful suitors had vainly courted the distinguished widow to a second marriage; but true to the memory of her loved and departed lord, she never could be induced to lay aside her “inky suit,” but continued to wear the rich widowed dress of the times, save that her head was surmounted usually with the coronal, thickly studded with strings of orient pearl, the distinctive emblem of a woman of high birth, holding the hereditary castle during the nonage of the heir. To the sole offspring of her love, and the last and lone

scion of a mighty and honoured house, the Lady Barnadiston had dedicated the widowhood of her days; and the blooming health and boyish graces of the young Albert often filled with joy her woman's heart. It was about two years after the death of Lord Barnadiston that one of the tenants, who had followed and served him faithfully during his lifetime, died, leaving an orphan girl, of tender years, to the care of the indulgent and generous Lady Barnadiston, who, with a feeling sympathy, took the interesting little Mary Milbank under her own immediate charge, and removed her from the fatherless house to the castle, where she at once became the undivided companion and cherished playmate of the young Albert, whose junior she was about a year; timid as a frightened fawn, gentle, mild, innocent, and full of winning charms, it was with the pride of superior daring and confidence that the cherub-faced boy-protector, with his long auburn hair and laughing eye, might be seen leading forth, and en-

couraging the heaven blue-eyed child to venture beyond the enamelled lawn, the prescribed limit of their infantine gambols, and chase with eager eyes and outstretched hands the variegated summer butterflies through the adjoining mead, creeping cautiously to seize, with a triumphant look, the fluttering insect, drunk with the honeyed dew sucked from the golden cowslip. The attachment of the children grew with their growth; but as they advanced in age, and the sylph-like form of the lovely Mary Milbank developed into charming womanhood and beauty, she rarely met Albert, while she became the immediate companion and close attendant on the Lady Barnadiston.

Untaught in all the useless and multifarious accomplishments which appear to be thought so highly essential to the whole community of the fair sex in this wonder-working age, wherein in female education so much is sacrificed to show, and so little importance attached to thrift and housewifery, the Lady Barnadiston, beyond the

skilful and perfect exercise of her needle and the homely duties of superintending her household, and not unfrequently kneading the immense Christmas cake, was not otherwise learned. 'Tis true she could read and relish the metrical ballads of Chaucer, and the fairy poesy of the imaginative Spenser, but her hours were more generally employed in working the rich embroideries and ornamental points festooned over the vandyked dresses of the day; in attending the solemn and impressive mass of the Romish ritual in the old oak wainscotted chapel of the castle; bowing in humble spirit at the confessional, and with a liberal profusion bestowing alms on the indigent and helpless peasantry, and supplying the wants of poor widows and distressed orphans; and, on occasions, riding on her richly attired and easy ambling palfrey, led by the old silver-haired seneschal, round her wide domains, listening with patience to the tales, and redressing the grievances, of her adoring tenantry. In such duties and such exercises did Lady Barnadiston care-

fully instruct the gentle and grateful Mary Milbank. But the beauteous girl was likewise permitted to benefit by the instruction of Father Gaspardo in the Italian language, which began then to be in much repute.

It was to the care and high qualities of Father Gaspardo that Albert, at the age of eighteen, owed all those superior acquirements and sound judgment so unusual to gallants of gentle blood in those days: possessed of a quick and intelligent perception, endowed with a fine sense of natural beauties, and an application rare in a youth, the lessons of Gaspardo were not wasted on a barren soil. Familiar with the classic authors, whose genius and whose fame have survived the downfall of their beautiful countries, Albert was taught to appreciate the inimitable force, depth of feeling, and wonderful knowledge of the human passions, displayed in the unrivalled works of Shakespeare, and to relish the rich language and poetry of the Italian bards,—“the bards of

chivalry and hell,”—and he whose tuneful numbers were strung in the cause of all-conquering love; but it was to the moral and truth-inspiring writings of the great Bacon, that had just then opened a fertile source of information to the world, that Gaspardo more particularly directed the mind of his pupil; and to the luminous pages of his own countrymen, Machiavel and Guicciardini, whose instructive histories of their native republic, and of the times, afforded such an ample field to exercise the judgment, and to teach the science of government, and the intrigues and fierce passions that must be encountered by the patriot and statesman.

“To you, Albert,” said Father Gaspardo, with a slow and solemn manner, made more impressive by the unequalled depth of tone of his fine, modulated voice,—“to you it will soon belong to go forth into the world with a rank and a name that must insure you an honoured welcome in the court of your native prince. I fear not, that you will be lured by the voice of

the flatterer, or that you will fall before the idol of pleasure; I fear not that you will bask, an insignificant insect, in the sunshine of royal favour, or that you will prostitute your talents to the intriguing whispers of the court. You will be exposed to the insidious caresses of parties, and you will have to encounter the unprovoked envy of many an ignoble soul. He whose path, my son, lieth in the palaces of princes, treadeth, perhaps, in the very moment of his most assured and exalted favour, upon the secret mines which are working for his downfall; and the flattering smile of royalty is often the deceitful prelude to the *damp gloom* of the *dungeon* or the *headsman's axe*!—beneath the *rustling of the purple silk*, and the *smooth down of the spotted ermine*, the *same base passions* are harboured, with a more outward show of courtesy and practised dignity, as may be found, in all their native deformity, under the cold shade of exclusive aristocracy, or amidst the rude tumults of popular assemblies. It is the

nourished pride of high distinction, which, if not curbed by cautious communing with your own soul, will, I fear, Albert, impel you into dangers that you know not of. Dost thou not remember in thy favourite Shakspeare the impressive admonition of Wolsey to Cromwell? "Fling away ambition, for by that crime fell the angels."

"I do, holy father," replied Albert, "but surely I have oft heard you say, that the man devoid of ambition was as a weed thrown on the bosom of the swelling ocean; he mingles amongst the crowd and hum of men, and is tossed about, disregarded and despised, in the tumultuous conflict of stirring passions, and, without energy and without a name, sinks into everlasting forgetfulness, and is borne away unhonoured to the grave."

"I have said so, my son, and truly said; but there exists a marked difference between the supine and apathetic wretch whose days are past in the cold and selfish misanthropy of a

useless existence, and he who pursues with steadiness and integrity that line of life to which it hath pleased God to call him. The active citizen of his country, who diffuses happiness around the circle of his influence, and when occasion calls, the patriot, bold assertor and uncompromising upholder of the privileges of mankind,—him do I honour far beyond the vain warrior, whose wide fame is cemented by the blood of thousands, and whose glory is based on the miseries of the human race.”

“It is strange, however, father,” rejoined Albert, “that in the long lapse of ages, throughout the rise and fall of mighty emperors, we can rarely meet with any character that has not been tarnished by some wretched vanity, been changed by the smiles of fortune, or corrupted by the lust of rule. It is a trite truth, that prosperity is the touchstone of virtue, and I know of none, amidst all the shining worthies of Greece and Rome, or of modern times, who have abided unscathed the test, unless it be the

philosophic Marcus Aurelius, or who have continued in the paths of private life, unwarped by flattery, or undeterred by persecution, to pursue the rigid practice of virtue, and to inculcate the purest precepts of morality, save the God-born founder of our faith and the sage Athenian. The testimony of all ages has sufficiently established that perfection is incompatible with the passions of man, and experience daily proves, that the possession of power, however unworthily obtained, will secure to the possessor the general adulation of mankind. However beautiful the impossible and imaginary models of perfection in the dreams of the philosophers, they have never been realized amidst the active business of life, and it seems to have been a curse entailed upon the human race ever to excite the genius of the conqueror and destroyer by the senseless and everlasting fame which generation after generation accords to their devastating actions."

" It is true, my son, that mankind have con-

ferred on the triumphal car of victory the halo of a name which has conduced to their own destruction, like the silly moth which plays round the dazzling beams of the glaring light, till it falls a victim to its admiration. And to the watchwords of despotism and liberty have been sacrificed the manes of many ages, while the star of the ascendant of either has been marked by the miseries of the human race. While we shudder with horror at the imaginary sword of Dionysius suspended over the head of its victim by a single thread, and the wild invention of the bull of Phalaris, we must not forget the atrocious cruelties of the Athenians in the days of their freedom, or the fierce laws of the Carthagenians against their successful generals;—while we tremble at the bloody tyranny of Galeazzo Visconti, and Castruccio Castracani, we must remember the drunken excesses of the Florentines in the election of their Gonfalieris, and the mad carnage that stained the Italian cities, in the deadly feuds of the Guelphs and

Ghibellines. The abuse of kingly power, and the excess of popular rule, are alike to be deplored ; but the former usually culls its victims from the aspiring ranks of aristocracy and wealth, and disregards the mass of the people, who may, in unobtrusive security, pursue their various avocations ; but the latter, like the voracious hydra with its hundred heads, must be gorged indiscriminately from every rank and station : the garb of poverty is no better shield than the patent of the noble. I dread, my son, that thou shouldst venture forth amidst the shoals that have shipwrecked many a noble and ardent mind."

" Still, father, you will allow it is meet that the heir of the Barnadiston should walk in the ways of his ancestors, and devote his sword and services where they are due, in the gallant circle which surrounds and protects my native prince."

" 'Tis just, my son ; yet do I fear that thy high and somewhat too romantic sense of ho-

nour, and thy morbid ambition to do some deed in the eye of thy sovereign, will one day bring down ruin on thy fearless head, and end for ever the house and name of the Barnadiston."

"And if it do—and I die with honour in the cause of my sovereign,—welcome such death!" exclaimed the animated Albert, with a startling earnestness that disturbed, for a moment, the collected soul of Gaspardo. "If I die such a death, my name will be hallowed, and the glories of my race shall be remembered in after ages with generous sympathy."

"My son," said the venerable father, "the lessons of wisdom have not been thrown away upon thee, and it is with pride I behold the high bearing of the son of my early friend. Serve your prince, and with true and loyal servitude, but let not your unchecked ardour engage you too far. 'Put not your faith in princes.' A mighty spirit is at work in this great country, and the day may come when the choice of duties shall be between the children of

the mother land and their anointed king. Never forget the charter which the steel-clad baron, thy ancestor, bears in his left hand. May God's blessing attend thee, my son ! I go to prepare thy lady mother for thy departure to the court, which has been too long delayed."

Albert embraced his venerable instructor, and retired to ponder over the career about to open before him.

CHAPTER II.

The castle once was famed—the mighty landmark
 Unto the country far—whence the proud chieftain
 From his armed halls sent forth his mandates
 To his vassal serfs,—’tis gone, ’tis crumbled into dust—
 And nought remains, but one huge massive wall,
 The type—spared by the wizard giant Time—
 To tell the story of long ages past.

ANONYMOUS.

PLACED upon a commanding eminence, almost on the verge of three counties, Barnadiston Castle overlooked that forest country, emphatically styled the Woodlands of Suffolk, and also the wide champaign flats and heaths, which extend over part of Essex, and the whole of Cambridgeshire, covered with mounds, the traditionary cairns of the Danish invaders, and intersected by the mighty dyke, the work of the

unequalled genius of the conquering Roman—of Agricola, or perhaps of Pœtillius Cerealis—who commanded the island for Vaspasian, ascribed by the awe-struck peasantry to the power of the evil one.

Pacing, after his late conversation with Father Gaspardo, along the corridors and lone galleries, through which the soft winds crept, stirring the soothing and deep tones of an æolian harp, and waving gently the streaming banners, whose folds swept over the hollow helmets and high-crested cones of his ancestors, Albert passed through the resounding hall, and walked forth to enjoy the balmy freshness of an autumnal evening. As he descended the broad flight of steps leading into the park, he was closely followed by two muscular and deep-fluked hounds of a generous breed, who arose noiselessly and instinctively from their reclining postures, where they had lain the livelong day on the landing of the stone steps, with their wrinkled foreheads thrust

between their outstretched fore-feet, resting their formidable jaws on the pavement, like to the carved monumental figures of those faithful animals, which may yet be seen couchant on the fanciful tomb of some knightly warrior of by-gone days. The path led down the verdant slopes of the park, and the watchful dogs hung close on the heels of their youthful master, ready with dauntless spirit to defend him with their life-blood, or at his cheering voice to fly forth with matchless speed and lion-courage in chase of the antlered monarch of the glade, or the foaming boar. Musing along the undulating banks of the little river, the Stour, which circled round the wide domains, and washed on one side the butting turrets of Barnadiston, Albert stood in enraptured gaze: while his soul drunk the magnificent beauties of the scene, the departing glories of the setting sun were touching with a softened ray the gothic battlements and mighty donjon keep of the lordly castle, and playing, in golden beams, upon the carved

images of the sainted apostles, who stood on the pinnacles of the arched roof in sculptured prayer, while the colouring of the richly-painted glass in the great central window of the hall, streamed afar off, like to the unrivalled tints of the rainbow through a clouded sky, and the shadow of the castle was clearly reflected on the silent streamlet of the Stour, which washed slowly but surely away, the base, the key-stone of the mighty fabric that appeared to frown down with giant disdain on its placid wave. The deep voices of the warders sounded clear in the still evening, and the armed tread of the sentinels upon the battlements might be heard, while the startling bell of vesper of the neighbouring priory of Kedington stole along the waters in sweetest music, till the faint and solemn sounds died away amidst the evening vapours which arose from the distant meer of Sturmer. The glad rooks were winging their slow and lazy way through the tranquil air from the open country, far beyond the market-town of Haverhill, to

seek their lofty repose amidst the tall and ancient fathers of the forest, who had, in untouched grandeur, surrounded for ages the ivy-mantled towers of Barnadiston; and the wood-pigeons might be seen, almost viewless, skimming along with rapid wing, near to the dome of heaven; while, along the slopes of the woodlands, and ringing forth from the valley of Wratting, which lay embedded amidst the most luxuriant scenery, were heard the manly shouts of the harvest home, mingled with the cheering songs of the gleaner girls, returning to their cottage homes, “when curfew tolls the knell of parting day.”

Reclined on the sloping margin of the meandering river, Albert continued in deep contemplation of the beauteous vision, which the magnificence of nature offered to his view; the shades of night fell fast over the land, while the bat flitted out from its damp home in the dungeon, and the melancholy bird of night skimmed in low flight through the noxious vapours,

hooting its long prophetic cry, twee wit, twee wit; hoo hoo; hoo hoo; and as the pale harvest moon arose majestically above her bed of clouds, tipping with silvery light the varied tinted leaves of the deep shadowed forest, and shining in bright lustral gleam over the distant downs; the short bark of the fox arose from the fell, and the hollow prolonged bay of the chained mastiff broke upon the stillness of the night: the stars, the radiant lights which sparkle through the heavens, played round the queenly orbit, shooting their streaming glories through boundless space, reflected in imaged splendour on the tranquil transparency of the waters, which glided away in softened murmurs, through the richly cultivated vale. It was a scene that might even have won a pang from the steeled hearts of those whose long communion with the world had deadened the warm and sensitive feelings of their earlier days; but the heart of Albert had not been hardened in the rude school of adversity, and he could yet

feel and enjoy the poetry of such a night, a pleasure which the dull trite usages of life are too apt to blunt. The hounds, the guardians of his person, were stretched in seeming repose, unheeded by his side, when suddenly and simultaneously wagging their tails, and, wistfully looking up at their master's face, they arose, and began a low anxious whine, endeavouring to attract his notice by pushing their cold noses against his hands. Albert checked their fondling, by "Down, down, Wolf; down, Charm, down;" and the obedient hounds at once crouched at the feet of their lord, who continued lost in contemplation of the beautiful scene around him.

"Well, thou art musing indeed, Albert," whispered a soft voice, passing at the same time her small and delicate snowy hand through the flowing tresses of his auburn hair, which spread in rich luxuriance over his shoulders. The surprised youth sprung at once to his feet, exclaiming in impassioned accents,

“What, my Mary?” throwing his arms in a warm embrace round the blooming girl, who stood beside him in all her loveliness. “Mary, my own beauteous Mary, how came you so suddenly, like some sylph or some fairy sprite, tripping to lead the dance with the elfins, beneath the shades of the moonlit forest?”

“Nay, Albert, thou art changed indeed, much changed, since even thy dumb guardians were before thee in my welcome. There was a time, Albert, when thou wert wont to say that thou couldst have distinguished the light step of thy Mary amidst the crowded throng, in the deep glades of the forest, or on the green velvet carpet of the soundless down; but the ears and eyes of my love were then wakeful, and his heart acknowledged no love superior to the love of the poor maid he adored. But I have noted of late, Albert,”—and the large conquering tear drop of woman glistened on the deep fringe of her long eyelash, “that thy manner is colder than it was used to be; I have

not from you the same show of affection and of love, which I have too fondly and foolishly prized."

"Say not show of love and affection; you do me injustice, Mary; none ever loved a girl with a more true and tender passion than I have done, and must ever do: let not the slight forgetfulness of a moment, when my senses were drunk, and revelled in the soothing powers of a night like this, engender an undeserved coldness and reproach. Sit by me, Mary, and enjoy the reposing tranquillity of nature. Ah! my girl, when I gaze upon that expressive and soft-resigned face, my heart beats with a fearful pang at the separation which must come upon us. From infancy upwards, through the joyous days of our childhood, have we not been all in all to each other? How often, in boyish glee, have I culled the sweetest flowrets, to wind into garlands for thy flowing hair! How often have we together strayed over the enamelled meads, while I have plucked

the violets and anemonies from their fragrant beds, and the honeysuckle and wild thyme from the perfumed hedgerows, and wove them into fantastic chaplets, to adorn thy childish brow ! And when in the merry month of May, the gay and glad tenantry have thronged round the village May-pole, whom ever did I select for the queen of the day, but the beautiful and orphan charge of my lady mother—the innocent, the laughing, and now the much-adored Mary Milbank ? You know the feeling of a heart that must ever be assuredly yours ; but duty and honour demand that I repair to the court of my prince ; and the reflection upon the career before me may have somewhat changed my usual manner to you : but my fondness is unabated, and the coldness you have fancied, is more in seeming than in truth.”

“ Albert, the memory of our happy days of innocent childhood falls upon my heart like a pleasing dream, from which you have

rudely awakened me, by the dread words of duty and honour, to which you are so much wedded, that I fear they will usurp the place I once held unrivalled in thy bosom. You have won from me my woman's pride, the concealed and jealous secret of my love; but I do fear, that in the gay and glittering throng of courtly pomp thou wilt soon learn to forget the fond confiding orphan maid, who will pray for thy welfare in the deserted hall of thy fathers. The love of woman, Albert, is too often prized no more than the glittering toy which the fanciful boy flings aside; but it is a love, too frequently deep, lasting, and heart-breaking, and bears its victim to an untimely but a welcome grave. Dost thou bear in mind, when, in the ardour and devotion of thy first-born love, when early friendship ripened into powerful passion, and you poured the soft tale of music into my startled and enchanted ear, how I listened in fond admiration, while you read to me the touching tale of the

false and faithless Bireno, who loved and left fair Olympia amidst the lone islands of the ocean? Even so have I thought of late my Albert would quit me never to return."

"Perish my name, if I could imitate the conduct of that traitor knight! No, Mary, it is not in seriousness you have drawn the comparison; neither is my disposition nor my heart framed for falsehood: how then could the first act of my life be the commission of a deliberate and cold-blooded deception?"

"I have not thought, Albert, that your abandonment and desertion of me would be ever premeditated; or that you would rejoice in the cold triumph of a victory over a weak and soft-hearted orphan. O no, it is not that I dread; but, bred in the seclusion of a retired life, with only one on whom you could fix the affections of early love, and that one myself, may not the courtly manner, polished grace, and admired beauties of some one of the fair ladies who adorn the brilliant court of England's king,

banish from your remembrance the poor and humble Mary Milbank? You may not think so now, perhaps; but the vanity of a high alliance, and the thirst of distinction, (a love in you inordinate,) may warp your mind, as it has done so many, and stifle the feelings which have warmed your heart, in first and powerful love—a dream cherished ever after in secret fondness, which haunts the victim of ambition, who often feels a pang, the remorse of early love, that strikes cold to his heart, amidst the deceitful smiles of the festive scene, and in the gay crowds, who foolishly envy his ‘high estate.’ It is the poor revenge, which blighted love wreaks in defence of injured innocence on proud and lordly man, the heartless destroyer of weak and confiding woman.”

“And it is a revenge, Mary, which the angry boy-God will never be called upon to exercise on me, for he has dipped the arrow which he has shot into my heart, in the beam of thy bright blue eye,” said Albert, smiling, “a

wound of cherished and incurable constancy. No, the character of the flirt, even among thy sex, however custom may have tolerated, and even encouraged it, from their enchanting loveliness, yet denotes a mind scarcely to be envied, and certainly never to be prized ; but a man who can deliberately, for the gratification of a momentary feeling, trifle with the affections of a confiding woman, must have a heartless soul, devoid of every generous and ennobling sentiment. We must snatch ourselves away from the treacherous beauty of this night, my girl ; the heavy dews will suit ill with thy delicate and fragile form, and the night-bell of the castle summons us to family worship and repose.”

The lovely orphan, leaning on the arm of the youthful lord, entered by the wicket in the postern, and repaired to the hall, where Lady Barnadiston and all her household were assembled for the evening service, which always closed the avocations of the day, in

the good old times when the English nobles lived exclusively among their happy tenantry.

“Wilfred, my boy,” said Antony Conyers, after taking a good long potation of home-brewed ale, the usual accompaniment of the primal meal, before luxury had introduced from far distant lands the tea-leaf, which has worked such a revolution in the breakfasting departments, and has perhaps also contributed prematurely to set the palsied heads of all the old women a shaking, who may be seen trembling over the fatal and adultering stream, extracted from hyson, ash, or sloe leaves. “Wilfred,” said the old gentleman, clearing his throat with a pompous hem, to a youth, whose raven neglected hair, and deep piercing dark eye, threw an unnatural and unholy gleam over features remarkably delicate and of an unearthly pallidness, and who at the moment was resting his elbow carelessly on the table, and his chin upon his hand, while some of his fingers shaded the jet pencilled eyebrow, which arched over, and

relieved his marble deathlike forehead, while in his other hand he balanced an old-fashioned, highly-wrought, silver spoon, which he rung unconsciously on the thick rim of a deep-painted china plate. “Wilfred,” said Conyers, in a tone which at once caused the youth to gaze with his calm sad look on the face of the good-natured squire, while his arm fell almost listlessly on the table, “I like not this little pleasure which thou takest in all spirit-stirring exercises and amusements, it smacks not of the son of jovial Antony Conyers. Why, boy, there sits thy gorged falcon, moping upon his perch like any old owl in the hollow of a lightning scathed tree; and though the bird be of the noblest breed, I doubt if he were now freed from his jesses, whether he would dare mount in the eye of the broad sun, and quarry the soaring heron near his piercing beams. No, he would more likely fly a lower pitch, at a twittering sparrow, or some chattering magpie. Have I not often told thee, Wilfred, that the hound

must be much blooded, and the hawk swooped through the sky, or they are apt to lose all the high qualities of their natures, and become fit only to lounge lazily on a mat, or ornamented with a silver collar and gaudy ribbons, to sit with eyes half shut on the wrist of some high-born lady? Odds blood, my boy! at thy age, Antony Conyers was riding over half the country in a day, drinking and laughing with all the jolly innkeepers, and kissing every buxom and merry lass, within twenty miles of the Hall."

Without answering immediately this reproach to his skill of venery, which was held in such high estimation by his father and all country gentlemen of that period, Wilfred arose slowly from the table, and stepping out into a small courtyard, he loosened two fine gaze hounds from their collars, and unclasping a long silver chain from a bar, suspended between two trees, he wound the end of it round his wrist, and unhooded a dark-coloured falcon, with clear grey

eyes, and a snowy breast variegated with black spots, which, after taking a short flight to the length of its chain around the youth, alighted on his head, stretching its fluttering wings over him, and picking his long raven hair with its curved beak. Calling the dogs Flight and Fleet, Wilfred returned to the breakfast-room, and quietly resuming his seat,—“Father,” he said, in the calm accent so peculiar to him, “if it will please thee, we’ll fly our falcons a pitch; mine has scarcely been freed from his jesses for three months, but he has been well taught, and I deem not that he will stoop to ignoble game. Although, my good father, I do not esteem the sports of the field, and other boisterous exercises, of so much consequence, as is the custom to attach to them; yet may be, when occasion calls, I can shiver a lance, swoop a hawk, or quarry a deer, equally well with those who never do any thing else. I have ordered black Wizard for the field, and am ready to mount;”—and as he bent a glance on the impatient

horse, who stood pawing the gravel under the parlour window, a slight flush of pride played across his pallid cheek, but quickly passed away; while his ominous dark eye flashed for the moment, and instantaneously relapsed into its wonted calmness, as if in scorn that it could be moved for so poor a cause.

“It is well, Wilfred,” said the honest-hearted old squire, indulging a burst of paternal love, while a large anxious tear gathered in his kindly eye,—“thou art indeed my good and worthy son, of whom any father might well be proud. Saddle me bluff Harry, my somewhat lazy, but staid charger,” shouted the boisterous squire, cracking a huge hunting-whip; “we will wake up our young lord of Banson with such a tira-ra-lee;” and he blew a blast from a hunting-horn, which was answered by some dozen deep-bayed hounds in chorus, and all the yelling curs within half a mile. “Albert loves the chase,” continued the merry old man, rejoicing as a child would in the anticipation of some extra-

ordinary amusement; "and he will follow it, too, all day through, with a more fiery ardour than you ever show, Wilfred; but you are a brave boy," slapping the slight youth heartily on the back; "many a time have I seen thee quietly draw thy hunting-knife across the throat of a stately and desperate stag at bay, when Albert has been hallooing on the hounds, who were already too many for the noble animal. Madly will he ride, but he wants your judgment, Wilfred.

"Come Ringwood, come Clearwood, hie Dewbrush,
hie Rake,—

Come all my good dogs, to the chase we'll betake;
Come through the low meads, through brushwood
away,

"Tis a fine hunting morn, with a rare scenting day."

Thus shouted the squire, interspersing his talk with some snatches and glees of old hunting or hawking songs; and striding forth surrounded with forest rangers, lure carriers,

and whimpering hounds, he mounted bluff Harry, and rode slowly, laughing, whistling, singing, and rating the hounds, into the courtyard of Barnadiston Castle, followed at some distance by Wilfred, who soon dashed past his father, breathed his panting courser along the undulating flat of the park, and rattling over the drawbridge, reined up black Wizard suddenly in the resounding yard, where he sat the fretful horse with apparent apathy, who, with his arched neck, distended nostrils, and glorious eye, proudly struck fire from the pavement with his ironed hoof. On the wrist of his chain-encircled right hand Wilfred bore his hooded falcon, which was balancing itself with outstretched wings; while a raven plume floated above a Spanish cap, shading his marble brow and chiselled features, and the dark horse embossed with frothy foam, gave him a strong resemblance to some hunter of Onesti's line "in Ravenna's immemorial wood."

The first sound of the horn of old Antony

Conyers, in the court-yard of the castle, roused up all the lazy yeomen, prickers, and idle grooms, who were sauntering away the day, reclined on benches, gossiping together, and drinking deep draughts from a huge tankard foaming with stout ale. The cheerful voice and horn of the old squire always gave note of preparation for the enlivening chase; and in a moment an unusual bustle might be observed throughout the castle: here were forest-rangers seen grouping together in their short, curtelled, green frocks, and leathern belts, displaying their muscular forms and gaiter developed limbs; and the rustic peasantry, with their short matted hair, but lately emerged from odious villanage, standing aloof with retained awe and gaping admiration, at the bidding of some stout yeoman pricker, who, with all the pomp of momentary consequence, rode up and down the yard on his heavy, long-tailed horse, driving back the forward village boys, who with bitter jests assailed his vocation.

“Give way there,” cried a little urchin; “make

room for Farmer Blunt; he and his big horse Doughty will show the young lord and squire the way."

"Why, Lord, Lord, I never heard o' such a thing afore!" screamed a rosy-cheeked, flaxen-haired girl in the purest dialect of Suffolk;—"why sure as I am here, Robert, if I didn't hear fayther for to say t'other day to our neighbour, Master Goodchild, 'As how,' says he, 'stout Farmer Blunt have had a fear-some fall in the park—all come a soldiering; for as how, when he were a trying to flourish his long sword round his head, all the same as a flail, somehow he lost his balance, and fell *sich* a thump right bang over big Doughty's long tail; and, Lord, if he didn't kick and groan surely; I believe you, I never seed the like afore;' and now you would have he, Robert, show the young lord how he be to ride: why it would be right down jokesome."

"Stand back with your idle prate, *maather*," cried Farmer Blunt in an angry tone, "and you, varlets of boys," waving on high the formidable

long sword, which he managed to use with better success this time; "I'll soon send you skipping!" and the ragged little wretches ran off a short distance, hallooing, "Halla, take care of Farmer Blunt and his long sword!" while the honest yeomen murmured in a gruff manner, "Well, what next, I wonder; here be the whole village, men, women, maathers, and boys, all a'ter coming gaping here so flightsome at the lord's hunting, when they should be a'ter a hoing and picking o' weeds from the five acres: to my thinking, that ground won't be cleared and fit for seeding this year."

During this assemblage, and the various dialogues going on between different groups, the squire and Wilfred entered the castle; and soon after, the hoary-headed seneschal was seen to issue from the archway of the stables, dressed in his flat red velvet cap, long scarlet mantle, buckled shoes, and red hose covering his shrivelled legs far above the knees, bearing his stick of office in his right hand, while with his

left he guided the piebald, ambling palfrey of Lady Barnadiston, handsomely accoutred with a deep, stuffed, red velvet pad, with reins of similar texture and colour, followed by his page grandson, who held, by a white bridle, a smart, sprightly, prancing jennet, with a neat side-saddle, upon the crutch of which sat a small, hooded hawk, of the round winged species flown at partridges, fastened by a silver chain attached to a buckle of the saddle-flap. A buzz immediately ran through the crowd, of “Our noble lady goes forth to the chase to-day;” and when, leaning on the arm of old Conyers, Lady Barnadiston descended into the court, richly attired in her widowed dress, with a black velvet cap, ornamented with a string of pearls, and a pure massive gold chain hung round her neck, to which was attached a small ivory crucifix, confined by a girdle of precious stones,—with Albert, unbonneted, walking respectfully by her side, supporting the lovely Mary Milbank, whose perfect form was well displayed by a

tight-fitting riding-habit, her laughing blue eye glancing through her loose dark-brown tresses, which had escaped from beneath her purple cap, surmounted with a snowy plume, shading her rosy and dimpling cheeks,—a long and joyous cry arose, of “Long life to our noble lady!—long life to our young and noble lord!—prosperity to the house of Barnadiston!”

“Thanks, my kind, good people!” said the Lady Barnadiston, waving her hand, and bowing low from her piebald palfrey, on which she had been assisted by the old squire and more ancient seneschal; “Conyers, let Wilfred scatter a largess among my people, they are honest and true to our house;”—and again the loud shouts arose.

Albert was engaged lifting Mary Milbank into her saddle, when Wilfred, having thrown a largess among the throng, stood beside him with cap in hand, his raven hair slightly blown off his marble forehead, restraining a fiery horse, and holding an embossed stirrup.

“Thanks, Wilfred!” as he turned from the blushing Mary Milbank, who was patting her sprightly jennet on the neck; “but it is not needed,” said Albert; “it is sufficient to know that you are my hereditary squire—my companion and friend you are also, and I like not such services from you as are more befitting the groom of the stable.”

“Yet, my noble lord,” said Wilfred in his calm manner, “I would not permit to an inferior the performance of a duty, which has long given my family a claim to the familiarity and confidence of your ancestors, and which entitles me to be near your person, and to share your councils. Though I may be the friend and companion of Albert, I am also the rightful squire of the Lord of Banson; and by this stirrup have my fathers long held their broad lands and goodly mansion: it is a free, light, and honourable service, performed for a generous tenure.”

“Well, Wilfred, as you will,” cried Albert;

“ I know it is vain to dispute with you ; but, my fair esquire, your young lord wants not yet the aid of a stirrup ; ”—saying which, he received from Wilfred the bridle, and for a moment restrained the fiery horse ; then locking his left hand in the mane, he sprung easily into his seat ; and calling to Wilfred to mount black Wizard, he snatched a noble falcon from one of the rangers, and caracoling alongside of the jennet of Mary Milbank, he cantered with her through the divided crowd to overtake his lady mother, amidst the cheers of the villagers, who beheld with pride the high bearing and gallant carriage of their young lord.

“ Fairly does he ride, and fair is he to behold,” said a grey-headed old man, bowed down with the weight of an hundred years : “ well do I remember my old father to speak of Marmaduke Lord Barnadiston, the grandfather of our young lord, gathering his followers and spreading his pennon to the wind. Much like him was he in person and in mien, though somewhat

stouter and larger of limb ; but he was a tried warrior, and this is yet but a beardless youth—he has, though, all the marks of his noble race, and is a promising gallant. ‘Well, we,’ as the old man used to say, ‘went forth with our liege lord—a gay and gallant troop from our eastern borders—and forced our way deep into the heart of merry England, joining the Earl of Richmond, in good need, on the eve of the fight of Bosworth, with a thousand picked lances.’ It was the arm of my father that bore the banner of the Barnadiston, through that hard-fought day, into the centre of the fierce warriors who fought round the person of their desperate king. Richard was hateful to the nation as a murderous usurper ; but he was a fearless warrior, gallant in the field and sage in council. It was his genius, perseverance, and courage which struck down the aspiring house of Lancaster ; and in his closing scene, well did he uphold his former fame.”

“Is it true, though, old Soame,” said several

voices at once, "that usurping Richard fell by the spear of our young lord's ancestor?"

"Richard was not a warrior," said the old man, with something of a hectic flush across his cheek, and a momentary gleam in his eye—"no, my children, usurping Richard was not a warrior who would have fallen before any single lance in England;—no! they hemmed him in with a circle of bristling lances—they bore hard upon him, and he turned upon them on every side with the courage of the boar at bay; twice did he drive back their stoutest knights, and once dashing the rowels into the flank of his milk-white steed, he struck off at one blow the head from Sir William Brandon, who on that day wore the garb of the Earl of Richmond, and seizing the crested cone of the falling helmet, he hurled it on high, dripping with gore, and shouting, 'Henry Tudor is no more!' he raised the war-cry of the house of York, and rushing into the very centre of the battle, he fell transfixed, and absolutely pinned

to the earth by the spear of Lord Barnadiston and twenty others. Come, my Alice, let me put my hand on thy innocent head, and lead on to our quiet, comfortable cottage, which our kind, good lady has given to my old age ; my eyes are somewhat dimmed, and my step totters towards the grave ;”—and amidst the blessings of the assembled villagers, the garrulous old man slowly walked away, supported by his pretty grandchild, the flower of the peasant-girls of Kedington.

The cavalcade, led on by old Conyers, passed through the park ; and the squire occasionally made some apposite remarks, in consonance with his character, in his most respectful manner, to the Lady Barnadiston:—“ Yon tall stag, my noble lady, with his branching antlers sweeping the lower boughs of that clump of beech-trees, is a stag of ten : I have noted him this many a year, from a sprightly skipping fawn to a butting deer ; and now, in the prime of life, beauty, and vigorous force, he leads the

admiring herds through the slopes and dells of the park, the monarch of the glade. Some day we shall try his mettle and his speed with our boldest and swiftest hounds; and I do not doubt, from his high bearing, but that his death-note will be rung amidst the lifeless carcasses of some of his fiercest destroyers."

"It were a grievous pity, too," said Lady Barnadiston, "that our king stag should be bayed to-death, and all his spreading honours bowed to the earth by blood-thirsty hounds; he is the pride of our park, and I would not have him so die."

"And how, noble lady, could he fall more honourably than at bay, with the life-blood of his mortal enemies flowing at his feet, and he himself falling, after a gallant resistance, by the chase cutlass of our young lord? Better such a death, than to be ejected from the fickle herd by some luckier rival's force, and to breathe forth his expiring groans amidst the trampling feet of his own race. Proudly and stately does

he sweep by us, and the submissive herd bound along, lightly and gracefully, in his footsteps ; but once vanquished by some aspiring son, they will gird him round with fellest rage, butt him to the death, and insult over his fallen greatness."

"Strange are the ways of Providence, and inscrutable," said Lady Barnadiston, "and not to be impiously arraigned: even under the beautiful forms and innocent looks of the timid deer who adorn our parks, are concealed the lust of power, and the base passions of envy, jealousy, and hatred; and it may be that the poor worm we tread upon is working his silent way along the surface of the earth, to assume, after a toilsome and arduous struggle, the supreme authority amidst his grovelling brethren: what a lesson for vain and haughty man, whose dreams of ambition may be cut short with equal ease, and no more warning, than the career of the worm by our heedless heel; and his body become the prey, and, perhaps, the cause of

strife amidst the greedy destroyers whose dwellings are in the tombs. I was wrong, Conyers, to say aught in favour of the monarch stag: we interfere not usually in such matters, which we leave to your superior experience."

"I am too much honoured, noble lady," replied the old squire, doffing his cap, and bowing low; "rude am I of speech, and unlearned, save in sportly calling and rough exercises; little beyond my devotion and love to your house have I to recommend me. It is time we begin our pastime: I see young Soame, the ranger, has marked down a covey of partridges, and Albert is unhooding the hawk of Mistress Milbank, who can strike to the ground any of the round-winged game; and prettily enough does the young lady bear the bird;—there they go!" and putting her jennet to speed, the lovely Mary flung her falcon aloft, who soared an instant, and selecting its victim, swooped down and struck the trembling partridge, with truest precision, on the back of the head;

stunned by the blow, the unconscious bird towered aloft perpendicularly, and leaving its life amidst the clouds, fell to the earth with the velocity of a falling stone.

“Well and neatly struck,” shouted old Conyers, “and as pretty a piece of the round-winged sport as you shall often see; but it will be well now to beat up the prime pride of all hawking, the grey blue-tinged heron; the ladies will rest on this elevated ground with me, while with a dozen of rangers and lure carriers, you, Wilfred, can ride down below to the marshy grounds with our young lord, while they beat up the tall rushes along the meer of Sturmer—they will soon spring a long-necked heron which will try the courage and bold flight of your falcons, or Antony Conyers knows nothing of the nature of the bird.”

“Come, Wilfred,” cried Albert, putting his fiery horse into a bounding gallop, and stretching forth his right arm, on the wrist of which a powerful hooded falcon balanced itself with

extended wings, "a zechin that my hawk strikes the bird first."

"I would be loth, my lord," said Wilfred, "to wager my bird; I have not flown him for many a day, and the want of practice may be against him in a lasting fight; but the bird is of noble breeding, and will not, to my thinking, prove a haggart. We may, however, try him, for there goes as close plumed and strong winged a heron as any sportsman would desire to behold; look how he skims above the oziers with his spear beak, and long, bony neck curved round. We must dispatch our messengers to bid him go aloft; the canopy of heaven is more befitting his pride than the noxious exhalations of a lowly marsh;" and galloping forward, both the youths unhooded their hawks, and cast them off with an animated cry.

Circling round for a moment, and suspended on their wings, as though to feel the freedom of their pinions, the noble falcons espied their game flapping slowly along above the tall rushes

on the margin of the meer, and darting off in lightning chase, they rapidly approached the object of pursuit; when within the distance of a few yards, the heron perceived its implacable foes: uttering a shrill scream, it shot up towards the sky, straight as a viewless arrow on the wing, and having obtained a considerable elevation above its pursuers, bore away, in measured flight, directly over the heads of the squire and his lady charge, towards the towers of Barnadiston Castle.

“ ’Tis a stout winged bird, my noble lady,” cried the squire, gazing with the delight of a keen sportsman on the passing heron, “and full of natural craft; ’tis wonderful the instinct that God hath given to his creatures towards the preservation of life. Yon blue-tinged bird, my noble lady, directeth his flight towards the turrets of your castle, with good cause and wise judgment; in a few moments you shall see him, surrounded by a mob of loquacious jackdaws, issuing forth from their creviced abodes amidst

the time-worn towers of Barnadiston, and the flight of the noble falcons shall be much impeded by the noisy daws, who will summon their cawing brethren of the trees to annoy the tyrants of the skies, who may in irritation pounce on their ignoble tormentors, while the wily heron shall escape; besides, my lady, the broad sun is beaming directly over the donjon keep of the castle."

"It is so, Conyers," said Lady Barnadiston, "but what connexion can the sun have with our present sport?"

"Much and great, my lady; there are no birds save the imperial eagle, the soaring heron, and but one rare race of daring falcons, who can, with stedfast and undaunted eye, mount boldly in the face of its glittering rays; and yon heron, who now hangs on suspended wing, over the flag-staff of the castle, will, I doubt not, try the breeding and fearless vision of our falcons. Were they of any but the best bird blood, I can see from the position of that

bird, that we might return home, my noble lady."

Wheeling round and round in rapid gyrations, the falcons had raised themselves to the level of the heron, and they skimmed through the air in renewed pursuit, with the velocity of a swallow circling round the verdant meadows on a summer eve. Once more rapidly closing on their prey, they were encountered by the noisy clamours and teasing insults of the whole population of rooks and daws,—but true to their noble breeding, they winged their rapid flight direct towards their game, undeterred by the provocations of their ignoble tormentors.

With eyes elevated in absorbing admiration, Albert and Wilfred urged on their horses to the swiftest gallop, and were yet scarce able to keep the chase in sight; it was then that the heron, awaiting in floating calmness the near approach of its foes, darted up perpendicularly, full towards the broad disk of the mid-day sun, shooting up higher, and yet more high, till its

fading form was no longer visible to human ken : again, wheeling round the wide horizon of the sky, the falcons soared on outstretched wing, smoothly but perceptibly, gradually but more slowly disappearing from sight. A few moments of anxious suspense occurred, and the sportsmen continued to gaze intently upwards, when Albert cried out, "I see them ; one falcon is sweeping above the heron, who has thrown itself on its back, and is falling fast downward, defending itself with protruding beak and threatening claws, against the fell swoop of the daring hawk. Well and gallantly struck," shouted Albert.

"But unfortunately and fatally," rejoined Wilfred ; "mortally is the bold bird speared on the beak of the crafty heron, and down, down, down he comes, spreading his fluttering wing vainly to the winds ; the life-blood is flowing from his heart ; and, lo, he lays on the ground, the brilliancy of his bright eye extinguished in the agonies of death. It is your bird, Lord

Albert ; and if mine prove haggart and revengeth not his comrade on yon proud heron, he shall be nailed to the barn-door with mousing owls and weazels, or stuck up as a scarecrow in the fields." "Fear him not," said Albert, "he has quarried the heron ;—here they come, tumbling down, screaming and scratching in fierce fight ; the heron flieth not that could survive the iron beak and clenched talons of your falcon. Shout the death knell—he has him firm by the long, bony neck, and he alighteth with him ; he is giving the death-blow to the soaring heron this moment, on the buttress of the topmost tower of our castle. Hark how the warders hail the victory of your falcon ; and see, they display the lifeless body of the heron ! Some of that bold bird's plumes shall waive over my crested helmet."

"Bravely and gallantly, my son," said the old squire, "hath that moping falcon, which I so much condemned this morning, proved himself to day. I was wrong to doubt your skill

and judgment, Wilfred ; nor know I why I should have done so, for you have ever been apt and quick of apprehension in all sportly calling.”

“ I boast not, father,” replied the youth, cherishing his falcon, which had just alighted on his wrist, “ of much knowledge in such pursuits ; but the hawk, I have observed, that sits quiet and calm on his perch, is often more daring in the day of trial, than the fretful bird which vainly wounds itself against its bar.”

CHAPTER III.

“At the same time the bishops and clergy, who had been banished by the Arian monarch, were recalled from banishment and restored to their respective churches. The Donatists, the Novatians, the Macedonians, the Eunomians, and those who, with a more prosperous fortune, adhered to the doctrine of the Council of Nice. Julian, who understood and derided their theological disputes, invited to the palace the leaders of the hostile sects, that he might enjoy the agreeable spectacle of their furious encounters. The clamour of controversy sometimes provoked the emperor to exclaim, ‘Hear me! the Franks have heard me, and the Alemanni.’ But he soon discovered that he was now engaged with more obstinate and implacable enemies; and though he exerted the powers of oratory to persuade them to live in concord, or, at least, in peace, he was perfectly satisfied, before he

dismissed them from his presence, that he had nothing to dread from the union of the Christians.”—GIBBON’S *DECLINE AND FALL*, c. xxiii. p. 353. GALIGNANI ED.

It was on the eve after his return to the manse at Kedington from the morning sports, that Wilfred Conyers sought the humble cottage of old Soame. He found the venerable old man seated on a rustic bench in his garden, with his chin resting on a stick, and the silver honours of his hoary head glistening under the departing glories of the setting sun, while his pretty grand-daughter, the light-haired Alice, sat on a low settle near his feet, reading to him with innocent fervour the impressive truths of Holy Writ. Wilfred approached with light footstep, and stood with arms folded behind the unconscious girl, who continued her pious exercise. She had selected the 38th chapter of Job, and was repeating the 33rd verse: “Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven; canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?” At the close of that beautiful chapter, “Who provideth for

the raven his food, when his young ones cry out unto God ; they wander for lack of meal."

"It will do, my child," said old Soame, "you may now close the precious volume. Wonderful are thy works, O Lord, and great are thy bounties. My eyes are dim, Alice; but my ears are quick, and I heard the sound of a youthful tread enter our garden."

"It was I," said Wilfred, taking the old man's hand; "glad am I to see you still able to sit out in the open air, and enjoy the freshness of the evening breeze."

"Ever hast thou been kind and considerate to me, Wilfred Conyers, and my heart rejoices at the sound of thy voice: thanks to the sparing hand of God, which has lightly touched my old age, and the temperance of a healthful and industrious life, I still can feel and relish the genial influence of the season: Alice too is my good and watchful nurse, and makes my home a comfort to me; and Robert, her brother, is well cared for at the castle. It will soon be

the hour of our frugal meal, and may be you will share it with us; we only await the presence of the godly Obadiah Fairlove."

"Gladly will I do so," said Wilfred, "and the rather, that I approve the discourses of the godly Obadiah. Alice, I fear that thy following after the simple worship of the Lutheran faith may not be well received, amidst this hive of Papists. Noble is our lady, and generous is Lord Albert; and although they have shown favour to Obadiah Fairlove, in the presentation unto him of the living of Great Thurlow, where the people are of the persuasion of the Established Church, yet would they not desire that the godly Obadiah should steal the sheep from their own domain of Kedington. Good is Master Fairlove, and full of meekness and charity; but he is hateful to my father, and it cannot be desired that he should raise up enemies among the bigoted peasantry of our village, who are attached to their ancient rites."

"The enemies of the Lord are many, and

fierce, Wilfred; but Obadiah Fairlove will, nevertheless, preach the good cause," exclaimed a shuffling personage, who had just entered the garden, and approached with a faltering gait towards the group, who were seated at the cottage door. "God's blessing upon yow, Master Soame and your pious grandchild; with you, Wilfred Conyers, I would urge some discourse: much pains have I taken with you of late; but yet is thy spirit stubborn, and thy inclinations after the frivolous amusements of the ungodly. You are over-given to the cruel and heathenish practices, termed by the vain knowledge of the prideful, field sports."

"That I occasionally join in such heathenish practices as you have been pleased to term the chase, I will not deny, Master Obadiah," said Wilfred; "nor can I find any sufficient cause to blame, therefore. I have hearkened to thy discourses, and have fallen away from the faith of my fathers at thy persuasion, and, through the influence of Alice Soame, to the doctrines I

have embraced I shall be steadfast ; but I cannot subscribe to the justice of your censure upon the pastimes I occasionally engage in : they are manly, and of a generous tendency ; and the knowledge which the sportsman must acquire, if he be a proficient in his avocation, must open sources for contemplation, and furnish him with convincing evidence, drawn from the book of nature, of the bountiful goodness and all-wise dispensation of a great Creator. He must note the changes of the seasons, and the migratory habits of birds and animals ; the unclothed copses of winter will invite his footsteps—the rich garb of summer will deter him from his pastime—the departure of the martin and swallow from their joyous revels along the flowery meads, will warn him that the season of his delight approaches ; and the various metamorphoses of the chrysalis, in accordance with the fluctuating season, till the grovelling grub soars into gossamer beauty in the painted butterfly,

must surely incline the mind to the adoration of the Almighty."

"If such, Wilfred, were the impressions," said Obadiah, "engendered by a following of the chase, it might be commendable; but it more frequently leads to drinking, swearing, dissipation, low company, and all ungodliness: and besides, it is in especial favour, and much regarded by the blood-thirsty papists, "whose ways are the ways of wickedness."

"Master Obadiah, you are somewhat uncharitable, and your obligations to the family of the Barnadiston ought to have softened your expressions. I have observed, that the teachers of the reforming faith, although in their early progress they recommended themselves by the purity of their lives, the austerity of their manners, and by their contempt of worldly riches, have imbibed all the vicious courses which they so loudly condemned in their Romish brethren; and since the death of goodly Queen

Bess, but more particularly in the late years of this reign, they have exalted the horns of their pride, and have raised themselves up to stern magistracy, and to luxurious feasting, pomp, and power. How know we, that thou, Obadiah, may not, beneath the veil of simplicity and humbleness, conceal the fierce passions of a bigot and persecutor? The present government encourageth not the aspiring genius of the puritanical priesthood; but I see not, if they should once assume an ascendancy and undisputed sway in the councils of the nation, that they would not be equally intolerant, and even more ambitious, than the followers of Rome: more dangerous certainly to society and orderly government; because cant, hypocrisy, and fanaticism, might raise the vilest wretches to a dangerous elevation. Although replete with absurd ceremonies, the Roman worship is a splendid and impressive ritual, and, divested of its corruptions, perhaps more apt to work a salutary influence on the minds of the lower

orders. Its priesthood, in every age, have been liberal and charitable in support of the poor. It was the mad ambition of Gregory IX, the powerful genius of Innocent III, and the steady policy of their successors, that secured to the papal chair a fatal triumph over the active resistance of the princes of the house of Suabia; but the purity, dignity, and influence of the church was much impaired by that protracted struggle: the love of temporal and princely power suited ill with spiritual grace and apostolic virtues; and the monstrous enormities of Alexander Borgia, and the worthless characters of the contending Popes, whose conflicting claims distracted the Councils of Trent, had undermined the respect of the people for the vicars of Christ; and when the naked and shameless extortions, and degrading vices of an eleemosynary priesthood roused the indignant and impetuous eloquence of Luther, and armed the unbending and stern spirit of John Knox with the irresistible weapons of irony, common

sense, and simplicity, the fabric of Superstition fell as if by the touch of the enchanter's wand. But good with ill they also overthrew ; not indeed Knox, who bequeathed to his cool and sagacious countrymen the simplest and most perfect form of worship that may exist with human institutions ; but the reforming prelates, who encouraged the vices and upheld the capriciousness and arbitrary acts of the unjust Henry, were scarcely influenced by any other motive than a love of power and priestly ascendancy. To obtain worldly wealth and temporary distinction, they scrupled not to sacrifice the people. I cannot venerate the subservient spirit of Cranmer, who lent himself to the persecution of a virtuous queen, and ridiculed the sanctity of his calling by the insulting mockery of quieting the conscience of the lustful Henry, whose vices he should have boldly arraigned. His own life was virtuous and simple, but he wanted the unbending mind and stern genius of the Scotch Reform-

ers; and in the end, he expiated at the stake his manifold weaknesses. The high priest of the English Reformation was the king himself; and the dictates of caprice and passion urged on the imperfect work."

"Wilfred Conyers," said Obadiah, "learned are you above the learning of the youth of this age; but a little learning, young man, is a dangerous thing." I commend, however, your studious habits, and would have you to continue to seek wisdom, which, however, is not to be sought for among books merely, but may be gleaned to more account amidst the throng of the busy world, or from oral discourse. You have spoken, Wilfred Conyers, with the tongue of the foolish, touching the abomination of the worship of Antichrist. Many and vain have been the ways of that Wicked, to seduce the people from the worship of the true God, to the senseless adoration of saints, of relics, and of painted faces, after the manner of the heathen. Well did

the Empress Irene do, to declare a war against the images; but God willed not that she should prevail: it was permitted (to answer, doubtless, some decree of Providence) that the relics of martyrs, and bones of canonized saints, should be a lucrative traffic amongst other unheard-of impositions of the Romish Church. It was reserved to later times to hurl down the idols, and to make clean the house of the Lord: when the foul spirit was chased from the land, and God opened the hearts of the people to receive the true faith, the righteous workmen in the vineyard were compelled to root out all the cunning devices of Satan, which his followers held out to dazzle the eye and to warp the understanding, like the wily serpent which, by the charm of its gaze, fascinates the entranced victim to its own destruction. The ostentatious support of the poor, which the church of Rome have ever practised, was but a small yielding up of the plunder, which its priest-

hood have in every age wrung from the despairing death-bed of the wealthy sinner ; and the distribution of alms to the lazy and indolent beggars, who swarmed in the courts of the monasteries, in the lodges of the Templars, and who multiplied in the palaces of the luxurious and armed Bishops, was wrung from the industrious classes of the population, to be devoured by hosts of retainers and ruffling brawlers. No, Wilfred Conyers, although our Reformation has been most imperfect, yet ought we to receive it with thankfulness, since it has cleansed our soil from warlike prelates, fat abbots, and loose bare-footed friars, whose enormities have passed into obscene songs and vain proverbs. Thy observation, Wilfred, in respect to the change which might be worked in mine own person by a sudden exaltation, is not to be despised. We are all weak and sinful, and are blinded by our passions into the commission of acts, which the provocation of opposition, and the enthusiasm of party spirit, frequently jus-

tify to our prejudiced minds, but which are more duly estimated by a discerning posterity. The barbarous cruelties practised on the Albigenes—the unjust sentence executed on John Huss—the dark deeds of the gloomy Inquisition, and the atrocious massacre of the Huguenots on the fatal eve of Saint Bartholomew,—were all the effects of fanaticism and highly-wrought religious feeling, working on cruel, cold, and superstitious minds; and I cannot but believe, that there were some engaged in those bloody tragedies, whom a misguided zeal had warped into an advocacy and approval of such proceedings. I am a labourer, Wilfred Conyers, in the vineyard of the Reformation, the fruit of which has ripened in this land; and zealous and devoted am I to the propagation of the true faith, and to the subversion of the Antichrist and his evil ways; but thou wert right to rebuke my intemperate railing against the followers of Rome, but more especially in speaking irreverently against the house of Bar-

nadiston. It would have been well, had I remembered the 9th verse in the Epistle of the saintly Jude; "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."

"Master Obadiah Fairlove, I like thy candour, and admire thy self-condemning spirit: truly and stedfastly will I adhere to thy teaching; but I must hear of nought that shall derogate from the reputation, or reflect on the persons of my liege lord, or the noble Lady Barnadiston: bounden am I to serve the Barnadiston, and I hope Master Obadiah Fairlove has nought to advance against such service."

"Wilfred Conyers," said the godly preacher, "much do I respect the house of Barnadiston; and although I cannot approve of their faith, well do I know thou art bound to them by the ties of this world. Thou hast an honourable service to perform, and perhaps you may be

able to assist in the work of reformation. I shall apply to thee and to thy situation the words of our Saviour to the treacherous Pharisees,—‘Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ ”

It was within an oratory in the wainscoted chapel of the castle, that Lady Barnadiston was seated in deep converse with Father Gaspardo, a few days after the hawking, when Albert entering, saluted his mother respectfully :—“The seneschal, mother,” he said, “brought me a message, that it was your desire to see me here.”

“It was, Albert ; the time hath approached when I must part with, and commit thee to the rude tumults of a contentious world. Fain would I have retained thee in my sight ; for to a mother pleasing is her only son to behold, and thou hast ever brought joy to my heart. Self-denial I have hitherto endeavoured to practise ; but my last and severest trial awaits me,”—and

the noble lady wept aloud. "Albert, my son, mine only son, I must no longer look upon thee. Charge have I given that the necessary preparations be seen to, that you may appear at court with all the attendance and following that beseemeth the last and lone heir of the Barnadiston. 'These letters, my son,' pointing to a packet which Father Gaspardo held, "are missives to my kinsman, Sir Philip Maulerever ; and my sister's husband, the head of the ancient house of Granville : they have much influence and weight at the court, and will provide for your favourable reception, which may not be otherwise, since the king will know how to estimate the last scion of the loyal and devoted Barnadistons. I would have you attach yourself, Albert, greatly to the Prince of Wales ; he is well spoken of, and, I hear, possesses a deeper cast of character than his kingly father, who is much given to profuse talking and fair professions."

"Long have I wished," said Albert, "with a

blameable impatience, for this very hour; long have I sighed to mingle amidst the brilliant circle of England's glory; but now that the time has approached, and I find myself about to quit, perhaps for ever, my indulgent and fond mother, I feel the pang of separation bitterly. But why should it be? let us repair to London together, and you shall there behold the presentation and reception of your Albert!"

"It may not be, my son: once, indeed, had I thought upon such a thing; but it would not be fitting. There was a time, when in laughing girlhood with my fair companions, the maids of honour to our wise and virgin queen of blessed memory, that I loved such scenes. Magnificent, Albert, were the festivities and gay pageants of that court, which will ever be remembered, with admiring veneration, by England's latest posterity; where the gems of her brightest genius shone amidst the courtiers and proud nobility, whose attendance was scrupulously exacted by the politic and jealous Elizabeth. I saw, Albert, the

purple velvet cloak thrown down and soiled, which raised the fortunes of the handsome and aspiring Raleigh; and I was present in the barge of state, gaily manned with scarlet-vested rowers, what time the queen, richly dressed beyond description, and reclined on silken cushions, listened, with a smile of pleasure, to Will Shakespeare, while he read to her the flattering and beautiful ‘*Midsummer Night’s Dream*.’ I beheld, too, the Bard of Avon paying servile court to the vain and splendid Dudley;—‘it was the immortal doing homage to the mortal.’ Since then have I not been used to festivities and gay company, and I should feel no pleasure to revisit the scenes of my former light-heartedness: then was I a wild and heedless girl; but years have made me a staid matron, and the lone widow of the Barnadiston. It would ill become me to mingle amidst the festive gaieties of a court, where I should appear, among the young and thoughtless, as some mournful relic of a departed age:—no, my Albert! within the

walls of this castle shall I pass the few remaining years of my life, proud in the reflection, that I have performed a solemn duty in sending mine only son to represent my loyalty at the court of my sovereign ; and, if need be, to die at his side, like his ancestors of old. Kneel, Albert, and receive my benediction !”

Clasping the hand of his mother, Albert Barnadiston bowed his auburn ringletted head, and sunk on one knee, while the noble lady, raising her eyes to heaven, poured forth a fervent benediction ; and as Albert arose and received the maternal kiss, she placed upon his finger an antique and curiously-worked ring, deeply engraved with the words, “By this I enter.”

“That ring,” said Lady Barnadiston, “is a signet, the most esteemed jewel of your house, and imparts to you the privilege of entering unquestioned into the presence of the kings of England, and of offering any advice without fear of punishment ; guard it with your life : it was a right conferred on one of your ancestors

and his race, by Richard Cœur de Lion, in reward of his distinguished bravery and conduct in the great battle of Ascalon, fought against the renowned Saladin. Although a most honourable privilege, your family have ever felt too much respect for their princes to enforce it, save once, when Hildibrand Lord Barnadiston, hearing that King John had levied an army to infringe the articles, signed with the barons at Runnymede, entered the presence chamber, armed cap-à-pié, where John stood with Pandolphus, the legate of the pope, and a crowd of sycophants and courtiers, and raising the visor of his helmet, ‘My liege,’ he said, ‘I, Hildibrand Lord Barnadiston, have been told that you are about to yield up these fair realms to the pope;—if it be so, I would have you to know, that the barons of England hold their lands by the right of the sword; and the circle of glory, which Norman William placed on his conquering brow, must not be bestowed by the capriciousness or timidity of a pope, like the

iron crown of the Lombards. We owe vassalage to our king; but if he yield up his right we are free to choose our liege lord. Pause, therefore, gracious sovereign, before you commit a deed which will cover you with infamy and shame.' Without further word, your fearless ancestor turned from the pale king and astonished courtiers, descended into the courtyard, and mounting his war-horse, returned to the camp of the Earls of Salisbury and Pembroke. Uphold, Albert, the fame of your house: to-night we part, and on the morrow, at an early hour, Wilfred Conyers, your esquire, and a dozen of stout retainers, will accompany you on your journey to London. Farewell, my son; I could not bear to see your departure."

Albert flung himself into the arms of his mother, who warmly returned his affectionate embrace, and kissing his fine forehead, the noble lady retired to her own apartments to indulge her sacred sorrows.

Some days after his visit at the cottage of

old Soame, Wilfred Conyers was summoned by his father, who proceeded gravely with such advice as the importance of the subject seemed to demand.

“ Wilfred,” said the old ’squire, “ our noble lady has issued her commands, that the followers of our young lord shall be held in readiness to depart with him to-morrow for the court. I must part with thee, my son, but I commit thee to the honourable keeping and service of all our race, as the companion and hereditary ’squire of the Lords of Banson. Albert loves thee, and will hearken unto thy counsels. Let thy demeanour be always respectful ; be true and faithful, and never let it be said, that the son of Antony Conyers was regardless of his trust, and false to his lord.”

“ Fear me not, father,” said Wilfred ; “ Albert is hot and fiery, but of a generous temper, and nobly given. Cool am I of mood, and calm withal amidst stirring excitement : educated beyond my station, it would be an ill

requital to the old age and paternal solicitude of an indulgent father, were I to do aught which should bow down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. No, Wilfred, the son of honest Antony Conyers shall never be spoken of otherwise than as the shield of his young lord and the guardian of his honour."

"I know it, my noble son,—it shall be so," said the agitated old 'squire, flinging himself on the neck of the slight youth; and holding him at arm's-length, he perused his finely chisselled features with the fond glance of a proud parent. "My Wilfred, that feminine face of thine bringeth the tear to mine eye; it recalleth the memory of the beauty and infinite goodness of thy beloved and sainted mother. This locket of raven hair, my son, so like thine own, she gave to me on her death-bed, and bad me deliver it to her Wilfred whenever I should send him forth into the world, and tell him to regard it as a talisman, which a virtuous mother bequeathed to her son,—the sight of which should

recall her image, and deter him from the commission of evil deeds. Take it, Wilfred, and in sickness or in sorrow, in persecution or prosperity, gaze on this locket, and think thy mother looks down upon thee ;”—and the old 'squire, with a trembling hand, hung the precious relic round the fair throat of his son. “ There, Wilfred, guard and keep it for thy mother's sake.

“ Come, cheer up, cheer up, my brave boy,” cried the 'squire,—for Wilfred had sunk upon a chair, and lay with his head resting on his folded arms upon the table, sobbing violently, overcome by his feelings, for dear to him as his life's blood was the memory of his departed mother. “ There is Black Wizard will bear thee, my gallant boy, to the battle-field, and a good stout hack have I provided for the road. Young Soame, the ranger, with a dozen of the stout young tenantry, will accompany the youthful Lord of Banson, in all the gay liveries and equipments of the house. And you, Wilfred,

must see to their good order and fair carriage. Encourage not ruffling or nightly brawls among the followers—they are ever too wont to be quick with their hands. I myself accompany you the first day's journey to Walden."

"It is considerate and kind—it is well; to-morrow then, father, I will be prepared." He arose and moved towards the door. "To-morrow," said Wilfred, soliloquizing, "I quit the paternal mansion and the pleasant valleys of my native village—perhaps for ever."

On the eve of his departure from the home of his infancy, Wilfred Conyers felt a dejection which he was unable for some time to throw off; that undefinable sensation which makes sad the soul, on parting from those we love, and are beloved by—that feeling of regret, commingled with a pleasing curiosity and roused anticipation, which is excited by our first departure from the loved scenes of boyhood—to enter upon a world we have dreamed of, but know not of. Slowly did Wilfred muse along the

pathways of the neighbouring fields, but the natural spring of youthful spirits soon came to his aid, and his step became lighter and freer as he approached the cottage of old Soame, the patriarch of the village.

“ I am come to take leave of you, my venerable friend,” said Wilfred, taking the old man by the hand; “ to-morrow do I depart for London and the court.”

“ And you must then leave us at last, Wilfred Conyers,” said the old man, in a sorrowing tone; “ long have my days been in the land, and honoured; dutiful have been my children, and good; and kindness have I met with from all, but especially from thee. It is befitting for youth to enter on the busy theatre of the world, and under fair auspices do you adventure on the ocean of life. May God preserve you from the shoals and quicksands of a dangerous navigation: thou wilt have many and great perils to encounter, but I have a stedfast faith in thy prudence and ability; and the prayers of an

old man shall be offered up for thy safety. My grandson, too, must leave me, but I repine not. Robert is good and honest, and I doubt not will prove a faithful servant to his lord. Let your counsels, Wilfred Conyers, be given unto the youth."

Shaking the old man affectionately by the hand, "Fear not for Robert," said Wilfred; "he is a promising and likely lad; how could the brother of Alice be otherwise? But where is your fair grandchild, Soame? Alice is not used to quit you."

"No, not usually; but she has just walked out, an half hour since, with Mistress Milbank, who came down from the Castle, very sorrowful, to my thinking; and she told us of the young lord's departure to-morrow, and how you and my grandson Robert, and Will Thursby with a dozen of stout retainers, were to leave the country in the morning, with young Lord Albert; and then she took on terribly, and so did Alice, too; and putting their arms round each

other's necks, they fell too a crying, poor, sweet souls! and then they went out together, up towards the avenue of chesnut-trees, leading to the priory."

"God preserve you," said Wilfred, pressing the hand of the old man between both his own; "Robert I will cherish as my brother." And quitting the cottage, he flew up the village road which led to the priory, vaulted over the entrance gate, and with a throbbing heart walked along the broad avenue of chesnuts. At the extreme end of the long walk he found Alice Soame, leaning upon a stile and alone. "Alice," said Wilfred, taking her unresisting hand, "I am glad to have found you here, although you have ever set your countenance against any private meetings, though you have well known how I am affected towards you. To-morrow I depart, and we cannot judge how many years shall elapse before we can again look upon each other."

"It were not well, Wilfred, that a poor lone girl, like myself, should have encouraged any

unseemly meetings with a youth. Strictly have I been brought up, and I have hearkened unto the counsels of the godly Obadiah ; a fair woman which is without discretion shall fall. I have taken blame to myself in that I have permitted my weakness to listen overmuch to your fair speech."

"Nought have you heard from me, Alice, but what a youth might tell to a virtuous maiden without a blush. I have loved thee with a pure and holy love ; and I would not depart without exchanging some pledge of faith. It is lawful to be betrothed, and commended by the Scriptures. This ring, Alice, which once belonged to my poor mother, is of a chaste workmanship, and will suit well with the purity of your soul." And taking the yielding hand of the blushing Alice, Wilfred placed the ring on her finger, and imprinted on her fair cheek the first kiss of love.

"Wilfred," said the agitated girl, "it is time I return home ; do not think to detain me ; al-

ready I have tarried but too long. You have taken advantage of my weakness, Wilfred, in a softened moment, when I felt but too deeply the approaching departure of my earliest companion and playmate. Happily have we passed together our days of innocence; but I cannot look forward with the same anticipation to our love. That you will be true to me, I fear not, for thy character guaranteeth against fickleness; but the career thou art about to enter on is full of adventurous chance and dread perils. It is God alone can shield thee amidst the shock of battle, or upon the watery waste: rely upon his all-bountiful mercy, and keep to the faith of simplicity and truth, which the godly Obadiah hath revealed unto us. I will pray for thee, Wilfred, in secret, but divested of all selfishness; for the prayers that ascend to the throne of the Most High must not be polluted with earthly weaknesses."

"Alice, thy virtuous orisons will be heard as if a seraph sung; for sweeter far than angels'

voice are the innocent aspirations of a maid in her purity. Farewell, my gentle Alice!"—and as a tender lily droopeth in bending beauty to the passing zephyr, so did the lovely Alice Soame, in that heart-breaking moment, sink on the breast of the dark-haired youth of her love. He kissed her glowing cheek; and at the entrance of the village, waving his hand in adieu, he flew up the avenue, through the precincts of the priory, to the hall of Barnadiston.

Wilfred Conyers proceeded with a rapid step through the vast court of the castle, and entering the hall, an attendant apprized him that the Lord Albert was with Father Gaspardo in the library, and they had severally inquired for Master Conyers. Passing on through the banquetting-room, Wilfred entered the dark library, an old gothic room, with richly-painted, diamond-cut, oriel windows, scarcely permitting, from the depth of their recesses, the broad glare of the mid-day sun to relieve the sombre appearance of the apartment, shadowed by its beautiful,

deeply-carved, and curious sculptured ceiling. A highly-wrought silver lamp, on a large round table, threw its gleaming light over the contrasted countenances of the young auburn-haired Albert, and the high, bald, marked forehead of Father Gaspardo: the former appeared to be tracing, with an animated eye, some route upon a map; while the latter was deeply intent in the perusal of a paper, which he held up close to the light, shading the lower part of his face. The back part of the capacious room was enveloped in total darkness; and even to within a few paces of the table, it would have been difficult to have distinguished any one. The huge oaken shelves were loaded with rare manuscripts and ponderous volumes, collected for ages by the pride or taste of the lords of Barnadiston; and the lore of the ancients, the philosophy of the Pythagorean, of Plato, Zeno, and their followers, the lights of the heathen world, were strangely blended with the interminable and vexatious controversies on

the heresies of the Arians, Manichæans, Gnostics, Nestorians, Stalactites, and other absurd sects, which obscured the face of the Christian faith, with the vain and elaborate writings of the Fathers of the church—the long homilies of Chrysostom, or the Golden Month, the passionate and prejudiced invectives of Gregory Nazianzen, and the sager, but still unprofitable productions of the elegant genius and learning of St. Augustin. Vast shelves were piled with the utter trash and ignorance of the superstition of the dark ages, the monkish legends, the wild nonsense of the Saxon Scalds, and strange volumes of exorcisms ; while the precious child of some Arab sage, produced in the romantic and *enchanted* land of Spain, the invaluable Algebra with its cabalistic characters, (esteemed as a talisman, perhaps, by the ignorant Christian warriors who fought against the Zegris and Abencerrages,) might be seen with the condemned works of the starry Galileo. Treatises, also, were there innumerable, on the black art,

and the absurd seeking after the philosopher's stone; as also the whole Lutheran controversy, with the capricious pamphlet, which procured for the Kings of England the ridiculous title of "Defenders of the Faith;" as also another regal absurdity, on the "Divine Right of Kings," which might be curiously examined with an *imperial* and candid satire, the *Misopogon of Julian*, the philosophic apostate. A scholar and lover of literature would, however, have discovered that one of his order had been at work amidst this incongruous mass of type and parchment; for on one side, over a large stove which lent its preserving warmth, might be perceived a well-assorted collection of all the esteemed and valuable works of ancient and modern times, the department of poesy, headed by its immortal father, the blind old Bard of Scios, and the sympathizing, softer spirit of Virgil, showed also the sterner and more startling colouring of the Tragic Muse, together with the obscene gestures and extravagant ridi-

culc of her Comic Sister, in the writings of *Æschylus* and *Sophocles*, of *Aristophanes* and *Terence*; while the more tender and looser feelings of love and pleasure glittered through the odes of *Anaxagoras*, *Anacreon*, and the burning effusions of *Sappho*; together with the kindred spirits of a later age,—the bards of *Italy*, and the sires of *English verse*—*Chaucer*, *Spenser*, and high-soaring *Shakspeare*: while history could point, from the first child of her birth, the sonorous and marvel-telling *Herodotus*, to the terse style of *Thucydides*, the plain narration of *Arrian*, the elaborate pages of *Livy* and the classic language of *Tacitus*,—to the last of the *Roman race*, the faithful *Ammianus Marcellinus*; linking with them the kindred spirits of *Machiavelli* and *Guicciardini*: and philosophy shone with the mighty lights of *Plato*, *Aristotle*, and the sublime *Roman orator*, illumined by the fresh mantle which *Bacon* had assumed: while the intricate, *Janus-faced* genius of law appeared ably developed in the simplified

pandects of Justinian; while the cause of religion seemed sufficiently sustained by the volume of holy writ. Such were the works, and their like, which the care of Father Gaspardo had snatched from the mass of useless learning that pressed in *weighty ponderance* the massy shelves of the library of Barnadiston castle.

“Wilfred, I am glad you are come at last,” said Albert, as the young ’squire entered the apartment: “is every thing in readiness for our departure betimes to-morrow?”

“Every thing, my lord: young Soame and Will Thursby have charge to lead your horses, White Rose and Langley, fully caparisoned; four of your retainers will ride on a-head as an advance; four, with myself, will keep near your person; and the remaining four will ride in the rear, within assistance, if need be. Your roan hack is ordered for the journey, and the retainers are all fully armed and ably mounted.”

“It is well, Wilfred, and right squirely ordered. I think we need not fear much inter-

ruption on the road with so stout a following ; though, as I hear, a bold band of outlaws, of the old English blood, keep up their state within the wilds of Epping Forest. Merry are they of mood, and generous withal ; much given to feasting and revelry under the green wood. Well would it please me to see the life and bearing of these lords of the forest ; 'tis but a slight toll they exact, and are often courteous and full of rare humour. Wild lives do they lead ; but they practise only on a smaller theatre, and with less deception and more fearless courage, the same spoliation which is carried forward more extensively under the sacred name of kings, or of the war-whoops of liberty, hereditary bondage, or religion. These fellows but supply their slight wants, and seldom commit cold murder, are not treacherous, and inflict not the accursed rack, the invention of Satanic despotic power ; while custom sanctions the dreadful carnage of victorious armies, the sack of cities, and of the peasant's cot. Poor and

pitiable must be the humanity of those men who can forget that the flame which wraps the homely and peaceful cottage of the vale inflicts far more real misery than the destruction of the barbaric palaces of Persepolis or Ctesiphon, the scattering of the gorgeous luxury of the Sassanides, of Sapor, and Nousheervan. While the page of history groans with pompous laments over the fall of stately columns and rude edifices, we search in vain for the more moral lesson of some distressing tale which befel the poor, innocent, and once happy family, who were thrust out from their quiet homes, by the ruthless hand of war, to pine in want, or, perhaps in defenceless girlhood, to fall away to abandonment, the victims of atrocious villany. The folly of nations has taught them to submit to, and even to admire, any devastation, if sanctified by the use or abuse of a name, be it king or traitor, liberty, tyranny, religion, or all soaring conquest. With blood-bay Langley, a saddle-full of pistols, a fertile moustachio, slouched hat,

and a wrapping cloak, methinks, Wilfred, I should pass well for a daring freebooter."

"If appearance and courage were all, my lord," said Wilfred, "I should scarce find fault; the trade of the outlaw could hardly find an abler advocate than yourself among the most distinguished of their order; but although it may want but the sanction of a name to render their deeds as glorious as they be daring, yet is it fortunate, that society withholds from the victorious robber, individually, that praise, which is profusely lavished on the extensive plunderer, the chief of some thousands of legalized robbers. It is well it should be so, for the peace and harmony of the less adventurous, but more useful and industrious classes of mankind: the calculation of the merchant, and the laborious exertions of the cultivator of the soil, would be utterly destroyed, if every gallant youth in England, who could trust to his own right arm and a blood-bay Langley for a livelihood, were lauded for high

emprize—there would be an end to all national power, a severing of the bond of union.”

“ True, Wilfred, and spoken like thyself wisely, yet can I more easily forgive the hero of the highway, than the legal plunderer or the heartless gamester, who often, with the soul of cowards, gloat over the simple victims of their villany; the former is at least palliated by the manly quality of courage, which, among a nation of robbers, might have made him the Antar or El Belled of a conquering tribe; but the latter coil themselves with seductive arts and mean cunning round the miserable object of their pursuit, and watch his expiring groans, and perhaps fatal death, with a demoniacal apathy.”

“ Truly have you spoken, Albert,” said Father Gaspardo; “ far more detestable is the trade of the gamester and legal plunderer, than that of the bold highwayman, though not so dangerous to the general destruction of society. The vice of the gamester palsies every generous

feeling of nature ; and strange as it is true, that it is equally prevalent in the wigwam of the savage, as amidst the marble palaces of princes. It was common amidst the hordes of the simple Germans, whom Tacitus has so eloquently described, as amidst the wealthy of Rome, in the time of Vespasian and his sons : it would seem a scourge of the Almighty, or may be, an ordeal for the reasoning powers of man which he has been endowed with, in order to regulate his passions, and to elevate him above the brutes, and of which it must be supposed a fair account will be exacted on the day of judgment. Man has been endowed with the power of reflection, to save himself from destruction ; and if he chooses not to call forth this high gift of his Maker, he must fall by the snares of the Evil one : he may not with justice arraign the dispensation of the Creator, because he has not listened to the silent monitor within him."

" It seems to me, however, most extraordi-

nary," said Wilfred, "that an all-wise and potent Godhead should have raised from dust the glorious but corrupt image of his own likeness, with a perfect knowledge that the passions which he had implanted in his nature would conduce to his downfall; admitting even the supposition, that the firmness and strength of mind of the father of the human race had been all-powerful to resist the will of the serpent, yet was it too dangerous a trial for frail and curious woman, and the certain consequence could not be other, than that man, who will sacrifice not earth but heaven for the witchery of a woman's eye, should fall with falling beauty. The guard of angels and cherubims with their flaming swords, were but a sorry safeguard over the weak dwellers in Eden."

"The decrees of Providence, Wilfred, will ever baffle the ingenuity of human reasoning; and the knowledge of the wisest of mankind must be but vain and speculative sophism, if di-

rected to the explanation of the amazing and wonderful nature of the Eternal. It is meet that we bow down in humblest devotion before the unseen and mighty power of Him, who stilleth the roar of the ocean, and who sendeth forth the sun to gladden the heart of man; who hath given the strength of wing to the eagle, and clothed the horse in beauty, and endowed him with bounding power; unto whom the lark singeth its morning hymn, and the nightingale uttereth its evening vesper. That which to our simple understanding may appear unjust, is, for all we can tell, dictated by the purest mercy and benignity. The early and wonderful history of the Jewish nation, the mission of Moses, and the appointed priesthood of Aaron, the finger of Joshua, the sword of Gideon, the strength of Samson, the victorious stone of David, and the wisdom of Solomon, must all seem marvellous to our apprehensions, and have often been a subject of ridicule to the scoffer and jester; yet may they be shown to

bespeak the paternal solicitude of a great God for the human race: it was to manifest possibly, by the stubbornness of the Jews, a people originating from a holy and pious race, chosen and separated from all mankind, and peculiarly favoured with astonishing miracles; who heard the word given in the midst of thunder and lightning from Sinai, and who beheld the course of the sun and moon arrested by the command of Joshua. How, even with these mighty wonders performed before their eyes, mankind are prone to err from the worship of the true God, and to fall away to the adoration of idols and graven images! The Jews may have been a nation chosen by God to typify to mankind that they are an obstinate and stiff-necked race, and would not the more believe even in the presence of God; and that therefore it is just and proper they should depend on, and consult that silent monitor given unto them, whose oracles are far less delusive than the far-famed Dodonæan or Delphic shrines."

“ Let not, my son,” continued Father Gaspardo, “ let not the pride of superior wisdom, or the strength of a nervous arm, incline you to rely on your fancied excellences ; ‘ the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong ;’ and the race of life is one incessant struggle with young and able, wary and experienced, skilful, cunning, and wise competitors, all aiming by dubious ways to outstretch each other in the course. But vain are the ways of man, and unprofitable, unless he rely implicitly and unrepiningly on the mercy of an all-powerful Creator ; he may lose his all, and be tried with grievous afflictions ; but like the reputed Arab patriarch of olden days, he may arise a better, and even a richer man. It will be well now, for the night is far advanced,” remarked Gaspardo, resuming the paper which he had been perusing attentively, “ to explain to you, Albert, and your esquire, the fastnesses, defences, and secret contrivances, which the lords of this castle have ever held inviolate,

save to those in their immediate confidence, and which may serve for concealment or flight, should the misfortunes of war deliver it over to a besieger. Here, within this library, you will remark, Albert, that a trap-door, so contrived as to be perfectly invisible to a searching observer, will spring up by the pressure of your hand on the smooth oaked boarding, which is joined to the hearth-stone ;” and the Jesuit touching a connecting spring, a small aperture was discovered, disclosing a flight of stone steps, which led down an arched vault involved in funereal darkness. Taking a small lamp, Father Gaspardo descended for some steps, and pointing to the subterraneous passage, “ That,” said he, “ leadeth under the altar-piece of Kedington chapel, which at one period might have been considered a sacred sanctuary ; but the feelings of respect vary with the march of ages, and that which the forefathers may have revered as holy and inviolate, is trodden upon by the children with a

spurning heel. A continuation of this underground-work, therefore, has been opened into the fields by my care, which may be useful to facilitate escape."

Re-ascending into the library, Father Gaspardo wrung the hand of his noble pupil, and of the talented Wilfred, and the youths retired to snatch some repose prior to their journey.

CHAPTER IV.

She rose, she sprung, she clung to his embrace,
Till his heart heaved beneath her hidden face ;
She dared not raise to his that deep blue eye,
Which downcast drooped in tearless agony.

BYRON.

It was a dark, heavy, damp November morning, when old Antony Conyers, mounting his staid horse, Bluff Harry, and enveloping his portly person in a long, wrapping, riding-cloak, peculiarly fitted to protect the knees, wearing an old Spanish hat, with soiled feathers, placed well back on his head, displaying his full-blown, ruddy countenance, and healthful cheeks, reached the draw-bridge of the castle,

yet involved in a dewy mist, through which the determined old knight continued to fight his way with a dogged resolution.

“Odds blood ! but these young gallants are over given to sleep,” muttered the old knight, wrapping himself still closer in his surge cloak ; “ a piercing raw atmosphere is it, and, may be, they have not found out it is yet day-break, for this accursed fog shows but a sorry morning. Holloa—hilli—loo—hilloo—Wilfred — here is your father, like enough to tumble into the ditch of the Castle, or, may be, drowned in the moat. What watch is this the warders keep, to let an armed horseman ride into the barbican without a spear at his breast, and a bold, sharp challenge. What, there, Will Thursby and Soame, if you can’t find your way to me and spy me through this murdering mist, as you have often done through the deepest shades of the forest, old Antony Conyers will perish ignobly, like some brute in a pitfall. Hilloo, hilloo, help, there !” shouted the old ’squire, at the height of

his stentorian voice ; “ how now, my trusty old horse, these plunges are against your nature ; and now, like the ass of Balaam, standest thou still, and would speak doubtless of some dreadful danger, if it would please the Lord to loosen thy tongue. I will not imitate the false prophet by beating my sagacious companion ; wiser is thy instinct now, and of more trust than the eyes and apprehension of thy old master.”

“ Drop your reins, father, and thank God your soliloquy to the horse has directed me rightly,” said an anxious voice. “ Keep quiet, move not, for God’s sake.”

“ Why, what the devil now, Wilfred ? I feel the horse stepping backward ; ’tis not the natural gait of the animal, and may not be depended on.”

“ Sit still, father,” shouted Wilfred, “ or you are for ever lost. Here, you have missed the causeway, and turned up the footpath of the warders along the battlements, where there is scarce a footing for the horse ; and if he

makes but one plunge, headlong he falls down the deep abyss. Leave all to me."

When the halloo of the 'squire was first given, Wilfred was martialling his men within the court-yard; and from the direction of the voice he felt assured that his father had lost his way, and must be exposed to imminent peril. With that presence of mind which belongs only to a superior order of beings, he perceived at once the extent of the danger, and habituated to thread the battlements on the darkest nights, he hastened with two warders to rescue his father from his fearful situation. Moving on with cautious and hasty steps, he heard the violent plunge which bluff Harry had made, and the soliloquy of the 'squire thereon, and stretching out his arm in the thick mist, his hand came in contact with the nose of the motionless and sensible horse: he immediately grasped the bridle with an energetic determination, and desired the old knight to drop his reins.

Antony Conyers, when he learnt the extent of

the danger into which he had run, would have dismounted, had not Wilfred, with wonderful coolness, pointed out the impossibility to do so without the risk of falling over the battlements. In this dreadful dilemma, the warders took a circuit till they came behind the horse, and then, guided by their warning voices, Wilfred backed the horse with a nervous steadiness. Not a word passed between the father and son, the pause was awful, and, save the reverberation of the horse's feet upon the hollow brick parapet, no sound was heard, until the unnatural scream of Wilfred: his cry of joy arose when he threw his arms around his father, almost pulling him off his seat. "Father, safe—safe—you are safe, my dearest father, thank God!"

"Thanked indeed be the Lord," said the old 'squire, as he dismounted, and embraced his gallant son: "and you, too, my boy; thy calmness and judgment have saved the life of thy old father. It is fortunate I was on bluff Harry, for though gamesome and some-

what impetuous in his youth, he lacketh not sagacity and steadiness when needed. How is the muster of your men, Wilfred?"

"Complete are they, and high in spirits. A dozen fairer prickers never crossed our eastern borders — well armed and bravely mounted are they, too, on goodly steeds. Were it not that this canopy of fog concealed their equipment and gay fineries, we would wake up the village lasses with our farewell trumpets. It augurs not well that we leave our homes under a cloud; but we serve a race who sever all auguries with their own trusty blades. Will Thursby and Soame," continued Wilfred, "move on with the men to Haverhill, while I await with my attendance on our young lord — so has he commanded. It will be well, too, father, that you go with them; for you know the riding of Lord Albert, and the fleet action of his roan hackney, a pace somewhat too swift for staid Harry."

"It is so, Wilfred; and I shall e'en put

myself amidst the good men: may be I can show them good order of march, sometimes of advantage among the outlaw boundaries which must be past. But wherefore tarries the Lord Albert?"

"He holdeth discourse, father, yet with Miss Milbank, along the corridor of the pictured gallery."

"Whew, whew! poor maiden, I dare to say she is sick at heart to lose so fine a gallant as the young lord. 'Tis a pity, too, she should fall into the sear and yellow leaf, for beautiful is she to behold, and of a sweet countenance,—almost equal, Wilfred, to your sainted mother of blessed memory. Come, Will Thursby, give one good note of your bugle, it may disperse the black pall which envelopes us.—Move on, move on, my merry men, light hearts and youthful bloods; regard not the frowning aspect of the elements." And heading the small troop, the old 'squire led on at a slow trot, while the solitary bugle of Will Thursby

echoed through the turrets of Barnadiston Castle."

"Hark, Mary, 'tis the note of departure," said Albert Barnadiston to the lovely girl, who clung fondly to his arm; "it rings our knell of separation, and mournfully does its cadence echo through the fretted roofs of the galleries. Adieu, my own beautiful girl, adieu."

"Not yet, Albert, not yet; swiftly can you ride, and the parting hour may linger still;—Lo, long before thou wert stirring did I steal into the garden and pluck this white rose, bedewed with the morning tears. Wilt thou not wear it? 'tis the adopted badge of thy house."

"That will I, my Mary; and for thy dear sake shall my followers be decked out ever with the pale white rose, the emblem of purity, and the chosen gift of my girl. Perish all who shall dare to challenge the pledge of innocence; this flower, wreathed artificially in my helmet, shall I bear in the tournament and the battle-field; and many a brighter coloured floweret shall

pay homage to the modest white rose. Farewell, my Mary, farewell. Oh, that besecching upraised eye is too expressive; it would unman the stoutest heart. We part not for long; I will love thee ever—ever love thee.”

In that heart-rending hour Mary Milbank spoke not a word; but, like a Pythoness of old, she stood statue-like and still, with her delicate hands tightly compressed against her throbbing temples; and, uttering a piercing scream, she fell senseless into the arms of her lover.

Albert sustained the poor innocent, who held his hand in a close grasp; and when her attendants bore her away to her apartments, he accompanied them, and knelt down beside the couch on which she was laid, soothing her in softest accent; but still she spoke not—she could not speak—yet that pressure of the hand told more than volumes of fairest speech:—“True to you will I ever be, true to you, my Mary—fear me not—adieu, adieu!” and he kissed her burning brow. The gaze of the

poor girl was fixed earnestly on him as he moved away, and as often returned; and when his form vanished through the door, and his hurried step resounded through the long corridor, she would have burst away from her attendants, and, wildly calling on the name of Albert, she sunk back exhausted on the snowy pillow, with flashing eye and dishevelled hair, and her rosy parted lip quivered unconsciously with the charmed name.

“Wilfred, to horse, to horse, and away!” cried Albert, striding with long steps into the court-yard; and, springing on his roan hackney, without exchange of farther words, he struck down his round, high-crowned hat with a forceful blow; and turning the rowels into his spirited steed, he clattered over the pavement, darted along the causeway, and rattled over the ringing draw-bridge at fullest speed, closely followed by Wilfred. Turning to the left, they flew down the avenue of chesnut-trees, passed in fleet gallop through the village of Kedington, and bear-

ing on towards the high road, they continued their mad career, leaving on their right the cloud-capped towers of Barnadiston, upon which the pale beams of a November sun were just glittering, dispersing slowly the misty vapours which hung on streamlet, hedgerow, and dewy mead. On rode the young heir of the Barnardiston, heedless of all around; volition alone seemed to suit the temper of his mind; and whenever a turn of the road brought to view the lordly home of his boyhood, he pulled down still lower the broad rim of his hat, and rode on with a fiercer energy. Within half a mile of the market-town of Haverhill, they overtook old Antony Conyers, jogging along at a gentle trot with the retainers, and holding fitting discourse with Will Thursby and young Soame, the ranger.

“Our noble lord and Master Wilfred are at hand, Master Conyers,” said one of the retainers, riding up from the rear.

“I see’d them sweep round Sturmer bottom,

like mad—rein up, and halt!” said the old squire; and as Lord Albert galloped in on the band, old Conyers doffed his hat, while the followers shouted their hearty greeting.

“Thanks, my brave lads! ye have had but a cold, raw ride this morning; but a good breakfast, and some home-brewed, at Haverhill, will put ye all right. “Well, my honest old master,” turning to Antony Conyers, “how fare ye in this November blast? it suits not well with your age, and it belikes me not that you have ventured forth.”

“Why, for that, my lord, Antony Conyers heeds but little the elements, so they be not over treacherous; but I had liked to have had my death-knell tolled this morning by reason of the accursed fog—‘tis an ill wind that blows nobody good,’—when an old man is scrambling over battlements on horseback, instead of keeping the causeway; but thanks be to God and my Wilfred, I was spared to attend my young lord on his first journey. Think you, Antony

Conyers could sit moping in the house when the lad of his own rearing went forth from his home;—no, no! I will gladden these old eyes with the reception that the powerful De Walden will give to the young heir of the Barnadiston. Proud are the De Waldens, and boastful of their high descent from king-making Warwick; but courteous are they, and of the true and best blood of the Saxon and Norman, allied also with your house. Bernard Lord de Walden, is an old and accomplished courtier, and was a friend to my honoured master, your father. Right glad will he be to welcome the son of the gallant Barnadiston: the wassail shall be loud in the stately hall of Braibrook.”

After the halt of an hour at Haverhill, where the retainers were plentifully regaled, the party took to horse, and proceeded at a steady pace through that deep and uninteresting country which lieth along the borders of Suffolk and Essex; and the shades of night had fallen upon the land before they entered the broad domain

and tower of Walden, which hath obtained the superlative addition of Saffron, from the culture of that gaudy plant, which clothes the whole country around in yellow brilliancy. Old Conyers had, however, taken the precaution to send forward Wilfred, with a couple of stout riders on the spur, to announce the approach of the young lord of Barnadiston; and when the cavalcade entered the straggling town, the squire of the De Walden was in attendance to marshal the way to the princely castle of his lord.

Weary with his ride, and sad at heart from the remembrances of the day, Albert felt but ill disposed for tedious ceremony; yet he could not refuse the proffered hospitality and generous entertainment of a kinsman, and one of such high account as Bernard Lord De Walden. In his soiled riding-dress and mudded boots, he was bowed through rows of lacqueys, in the tawdry liveries of their lord, who displayed on their right arms the silver-plated badge, deeply

engraven with the rampant bear and ragged staff, the emblem of the house of Warwick. Kindly was the greeting, and courtly the welcome, which the young Barnadiston met with from the proud and stately De Walden, who inquired with much interest of his noble kinswoman, the lady-mother of Albert. "I knew her well, my young friend, when she was the pride and rare beauty of the surpassingly high-born, beaming damsels, the maids of honour to my gracious and honoured sovereign, our wise queen of virgin memory. I doubt not you have heard the noble lady speak of those days, and haply of a tried friend of your gallant father's."

"Often, my lord, hath my mother spoken of the gay and courtly Bernard Lord de Walden, her kinsman, and always with high respect and esteem; much used in early life to be the companion of my father."

"Aye, indeed, greatly so was I, and right glad am I to see thee, my brave gallant. Well has my noble kinswoman reared thee, and much

like do I find thee to thy honoured father in voice and figure ; but methinks thou bearest more of the feminine and admired features of thy beautiful mother, a Maulerever, but closely allied to the De Waldens—the females of our line have ever been famed for excelling fairness. I have kept you but too long here, however, my kinsman,” said the noble host ; “charge has been taken that your train be fittingly bestowed ; and, I doubt not, you would gladly exchange your soiled riding-dress for silken garments—the groom of the chambers awaits you.”

Following this important personage, Albert was shown through a handsome suite of apartments which had been given up to his especial use ; and yielding himself into the hands of his valet, he was soon metamorphosed into a gaily-trimmed and scented courtier of the olden time. Red velvet and silk, surmounted and profusely bedizened with points and ruffles, and a rich laced *vandyked* collar, displaying his fair throat,

formed his costly habit ; and a rare green mantle, carelessly tied with a looped, silken, white cord, was thrown upon his left shoulder ; while a cap, adorned with the white rose, and a single heron plume, waved gracefully in his hand, completing his picturesque toilette. At the end of the corridor, which led to his apartments, he found the old 'squire and Wilfred, in court-dresses, awaiting him ; while the seneschal of Braibrook ushered them into the ancient hall, lighted up with princely magnificence, wherein the feast was spread, and the Lord de Walden, with his matronly lady, stood to do the honours of their house to a guest and kinsman of a lofty and ennobled line.

Albert made his obeisance to the venerable, high-born Lady de Walden ; and gracefully taking her proffered hand, he led to the head of the table, and, seated on her right, soon entered into a spirited converse upon the manners and customs of the court, of which he desired much instruction. "Although," said the Lady de

Walden, “years have passed away since I frequented the court of England, yet is my son, Adrian de Walden, much in the following and favour of the present king; and from his discourses I have learned, that many of the old nobility, whose formidable independence was once so dangerous to their kings, have been almost imperceptibly shorn of their power and of much of their splendour; attributable to the policy of the house of Tudor, but more particularly to the jealousy of Elizabeth, at the whispered instigation of the crafty Burleigh, who exacted a strict and expensive attendance on the court, as also the ruinous burden of supporting the queen and her household in her expensive progresses. The young nobility were artfully encouraged in every vain and profuse luxury; and costly dresses, jewels, rich armoury, equipages, and numerous trains, indeed every sort of excess, primarily introduced on the Field of the Cloth of Gold, continued to be the prevalent fashion, to the total ruin of some of the most ancient

nobles of the land, who, perceiving too late the pernicious and gilded snare wove around them, have in discontent and bitterness of spirit broken away from the spells of the enchanters, and retired to their dismantled feudal castles, which they can neither repair nor defend, to brood over the wretched intrigues that have destroyed their dictatorial and dangerous ascendancy. In the latter years of Elizabeth, the vain sons of wealth began to rustle in the presence chamber with the Talbots and Howards, the Savilles and Digbys; with the ancient feudals, who fretted at their forced and ruinous attendance, and often remembered with angry feelings, their high and palmy state in the wars of the Roses, and their powerful intervention, which had raised up on the field of Bosworth, the imperious House of Tudor. Since the accession of the Scottish King, the feudal nobility have confined themselves chiefly to their estates, while the court swarms with poor adventurers from the northern hide; some

of whom, like the parasite Carr and his kind, have risen to fortune and eminence by high alliances formed through the undue influence of the guardian king; while a still more audacious and insolent race, of a daring and brawling genius, fitted for every villany, the following of 'high reaching Buckingham,' insult the nobility, and lord it in the presence chamber over their betters. The Lord Chamberlain must have a nice ear, and an adapting tongue," continued the Lady de Walden, bridling up proudly, "for seldom is he called on to announce a Howard, or a Neville, a Talbot, or De Walden, amidst the barbarous and unheard-of names which are uttered in the presence. My son indeed has been much about the person of the Prince of Wales, of whom report speaks favourably; though, as I hear, Buckingham is in as high favour with the silent son, as he is with the loquacious father. It does seem strange, that our kings and princes should seek their companions from the people of yesterday, and

so much neglect the ancient nobles ; but as my lord says proudly, ‘ it is now the feudal nobility who keep aloof from them.’ ”

Meanwhile, the wine circled briskly around, and the jovial voice of the old ’squire waxed high and mirthful, as he spoke of the joys of the chase, of hawks, of hounds, of deer, and round-winged game, with the Lord de Walden, who was much given to such matters ; and the only uninterested and silent member of the party, seemed to be the pallid-faced, dark-eyed Wilfred, who seldom raised the wine-cup to his lip, but gazed with that indefinite look which we cannot fix, whether it be on vacancy or ourselves. Well had he heeded the account of the court which the Lady de Walden had detailed to Albert ; and deeply was it treasured in his thoughtful head ; once only he spoke, and in a whisper to Lord Albert—“ It would be well, my lord, to bear a letter to Buckingham.”

“ Think you so, Wilfred ? I do not doubt but my kinsman will furnish one. A letter, noble

lady, to Buckingham, hath my esquire recommended," said Albert to the Lady de Walden; "may I make bold for such a favour from your honoured lord?"

"No, no, not from him, my young friend; for the name of Villiers, the upstart Duke of Buckingham, is as a shibboleth upon the tongue of our old nobles; but the commendation of your esquire is wise and well imagined, and shows him an observant youth, which he looks indeed. I will furnish you with such missives for my son, as shall throw open the palace of the favourite to your purposes: he prospereth not at court who maketh Buckingham an enemy. Proud as he is, and sensitively jealous, like every upstart, overbearing and most haughty to his inferiors—another index of lowly origin—but slight attentions from one of ancestral family like yourself, will win him at once, though he has been known to spurn away many a subservient flatterer of no mark or

pedigree. The letter to Adrian, who stands in especial favour with Buckingham, shall be sent to your apartments;" and rising, the Lady de Walden extended her hand to Albert, who respectfully saluted it, and with many thanks, led her from the room.

"Fill up the creech, the rich goblet of my ancestors, cried the Lord de Walden to the boteler, who, in the pomp of petty consequence, superintended the formidable array of bottles placed round the hearth, illumined by a blazing wood fire; "fill it up with quarts of our rarest canary, and spice it highly with perfumes from Araby the blest. Deeply will we drink," cried he gaily; "mine ancient friend to old Antony Conyers; deeply must we pledge to the prosperity of the young Lord of Barnadiston."

"Aye, that will we," said the old 'squire, "and to a gallanter and more likesome youth hath not this cup ever been drained, my lord; 'tis of curious workmanship, and the nectar wine

sparkles joyously on the frosted rim," remarked Conyers, as the Lord de Walden received the perfumed chalice from his boteler.

"To the health and fair fortune of my young and noble guest—to the fortunes of Albert Lord Barnadiston, do I quaff!" said Lord de Walden, bowing courteously to the young Albert; "may he be like unto his ancestors, loyal, true, and valiant!"

"He will be so," cried Conyers, tasting the luscious beverage, and smacking his lips; "health to my youthful and noble lord; long may he live, and may the house of Barnadiston never fail!" And nodding familiarly to Albert, he compressed the jewelled goblet with an adhesive lip, and drank off a draught, till a deep-drawn sigh interrupted his potation,—“There, my boy,” he said, handing it to Wilfred, “shrink not from the generous grape like the salt of the Turk; it is the kindly bond of friendship and amity with the Christian. Be-

side, it now floweth for the wished-for welfare of our lord.”

“None, father, feel a deeper interest than myself in the fortunes of my noble lord; but ever have I shunned the drugging qualities of the wine-cup. It suits not with my disposition or habits; and although I refuse not to taste the spirit-stirring beverage, which custom exacts at our feasts, yet do I ever do so with reluctance and dislike. It is a custom, to my mind, ‘more honoured in the breach than the observance.’”

“Ah,” cried Lord de Walden, “quotest thou immortal Shakspeare? the heavy-headed wassail, east and west, makes us traduced and taxed of other nations; they clipe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase soil our addition. Morally enough hath the bard of Avon written many a saying, yet was the rogue gaily given, despite his fair writings, and I wot well would have done justice to the sack or canary. The

smack of Falstaff's jolly lip sounds more of the nature of the bard than the unearthly philosophizing spirit of Hamlet. Honoured is the pledge among us; it is the pass which our ancestors in the olden time introduced, when bloodshed and the assassin's dagger often stained the hospitable board, to secure the unsuspecting stranger in the festal hall. He who drank of the draught with the host was secure from foes and the poisoned chalice. But it is well in a youth to regard temperance, for dangerous is the excess of liquor."

"Thankful and grateful am I, my noble lord," said Albert Barnadiston; "for the hospitality and kind courtesy I have met with at your board more than beseemeth an untried and raw neophyte, unknown among gallant warriors."

"I augur, though, thou wilt be known," said Lord de Walden, "where spears are shivering and swords gleaming, war-horses tramping, and plumes waving, or thou art not of the

warrior blood of the Barnadiston. At the court you will meet my son Adrian; they tell me he is politic, skilful, and hath a deep knowledge of human nature; rather would I see him free, open, and fearless, challenging danger, and not circumventing fraud. But he hath attached himself to Buckingham,—a curse upon the name! Brave and noble was Adrian in the halls of his ancestors, but the company of Villiers must form him for ——” The old lord checked his passion, and shaking Albert kindly by the hand, wished him a prosperous travel.

It was day-break when Albert Barnadiston rode out from the town of Walden with his troop, at the outskirts of which he took an affectionate leave of old Antony Conyers, who felt sadly down-hearted at the parting with his young lord and beloved son.

“ God bless you, my young master, and boy Wilfred! shall an old man ever look on the pride of his age again? God bless you, my sons! it is not well to linger farther—’tis a bitter

trial, but must be borne. Come, old Harry, we must jog back alone and solitary to our home. Much will my noble lady expect to hear at my mouth. Harkye, Will Thursby, regard my instruction about the outlaws.”

The roads were bad, and the weather cold, drizzling, and comfortless, while the country around, even in vernal spring or mellowing autumn, most uninteresting, showed drear and desolate in a November morn. It was late in the evening when the party entered the town of Hockeril, and the squire of Lord Barnadiston ordered the entertainment and lodgment for a gallant noble and a dozen of followers, with mine host of the Keys. Great was the bustle, and mighty the preparation in the hostel of Master Fairweather, the jolly landlord, and quaint authority amidst the burghers of the old town of Hockeril.

“ Stables are there enow for the horses, and lofts too good, may be, for the ruffling brawlers. But I wot not well whether we can content

the prideful young noble," muttered Master Fairweather; "the best bed-room, with arras furniture, and all sorts of queer devices, shall he be bestowed in. But where will we furnish forth the feast, dame? These young gallants are not used to the noise and mixed people of publicks, and we have no parlour but what the strange, wild-looking blades have walked into. It would be no child's play to be at paws with such an audacious set of desperates as I ken them to be; though honest John Fairweather saith nought to prompt payers and easy reckoners."

"Why, for that matter," screamed an elderly personage, in a shrill female octave, "I see not but what you are always over-given to account lordlings and such like, Master John Fairweather. For my part, as holy Habakkuk Cant saith, 'it is an abomination and sinful abuse of the word, to be calling weak and foolish mortals after the name of the Lord;' the people of God who follow after the counsels of

Habakkuk Cant, which is the only creed, laugh to scorn such heathenish distinctions ; vain are they, and a stumbling-block in the way of righteousness ; ungodly, too, but they shall fall before the sword of the servants of the Lord. 'This young noble may be content with the best food and room we can afford, though there be Master Walter and some of his folk regaling themselves therein. An orderly and pious conducted man is Master Walter, and properly do his men comport themselves in the town. 'Tis not our business to mind how they get their living, so they pay and are free-handed ; the gold of a noble chinks not pleasanter than the zechin of a ——"

" Well, dame, as you will ; these folk, may be, will be civil to the young gallant ; and if they should turn to brawling, they may get the worst of it ; for the Suffolk border-men are stern of mood, though peaceably given and kind-hearted."

" A gay troop, captain, and stoutly armed,"

said a fierce-looking fellow, hanging half his body out of the parlour-window, and gazing with an impudent stare on all modest and quiet passers-by, curling an immense mustachio, with a broad steeple-crowned flapping hat, cocked on one side over his thick eye-brow ; “ I will to the yard, and note their numbers and order. Yon young cavalier, with his flowing ringlets, is a high-bearing gallant, and sits his horse with a confident daring ; he is a fellow of mark and quality, I warrant, and would pay down a heavy ransom to be free from the lodging under the greenwood.”

“ Remember where you are, and hide that ruffian face, if you can,” said Master Walter, in a stern authoritative voice ; “ these are birds of a flight too soaring for such rude contrivances as you are skilled in. Let none dare to stir till I shall give command ; keep orderly behaviour, and be modest and quiet in your talk. I may find work enough, perhaps, for ye all, and haply warmer than you may wish.”

And the chief of the outlaws, for such he was, walked into the stable-yard of the Keys.

“A foul ride and a wet morning, fair sir,” said the outlaw, making an obeisance, and bowing to Albert as he dismounted from blood-bay Langley, and gave him streaming from his exercise into the hands of a groom. “See him well tended, Thursby; a deep litter and a good sieveful of light dancing corn. How proudly your eye glances, my brave steed!” patting the arched neck of the beautiful horse. “Bad are the roads, sir, and far have we ridden, and sometime fast,” returning the courtesy of the outlaw; “but you see a gallant horse who heeds not much what path he may light on.”

“He is indeed a most blood-like creature, with swelling points, and every promise of great performance; small head, light neck, deep chest, strong-loined, short back, with muscular arms and gaskins, and clean fleshless hocks. I doubt not he comes of the eastern blood, com-

mingled with the giant bone of the Norman war-horse."

If there was one thing which could win the heart of Albert, it was the judicious praise of his horse, from one who seemed to be well versed in the qualities of that animal; and entering with the frankness of a youth into an animated discourse on so favourite a theme, he found the outlaw so versant and communicative on this, as on other subjects, that he desired his company at the inn, which being acceded to without demur, they entered the parlour of the hostel, where a group of men were seated round a table, conversing in low whispers. "Holloo, holy Mistress Fairweather," said the outlaw, "provide these fellows with other accommodation; they seem peaceable folk, but we would have the parlour to ourselves. Say that a personage of quality would be alone."

"Aye," muttered Mrs. Fairweather, the captain is always most dangerous and scheme-

ful when he is so civil. "Hear, ye sinful swearers, said the hypocritical Mrs. Fairweather in a whisper to the fierce-looking whiskered robber, "ye must tramp; find ye out some other lodgment, 'tis the will of your captain."

Without a grumble, or a moment's demur, the knot of robbers followed Mrs. Fearweather, and sallying into the stable-yard—"We will to the Chequers," said the moustached robber to his companions; it is like we shall be called for before the night be over, for the young gallant don't seem shy with the captain."

Wilfred Conyers, who happened at the moment to be leaning behind the door in the stable, overheard this observation of so suspicious a tendency. When he repaired to the parlour, the countenance of the robber chief quailed under the scrutiny of his dark stedfast eye; but he instantly recovered his composure, and returned courteously the salutation of Wilfred.

"Here have we, my esquire, fallen in with a wayfarer like ourselves," said Lord Albert;

“and as companionship is the soul of life, I have e’en prevailed on the gentleman to share our evening meal.”

In the meantime, mine host of the Keys entered the parlour with a clean apron on, and bearing a huge old-fashioned dish, amply filled with a roasted sirloin of beef, while his crabbed and saintly mistress placed upon the table the various light infantry of vegetables, bread, and other smaller appurtenances to the furnishing forth of a homely dinner.

“Our cookery is of the plain sort, my lord,” said Master Fairweather, with a smirking smile and submissive brow; “but we are prided on our decent linen and cleanliness, and our wine is of the best growth: rare claret in long-necked dark bottles, much cobwebbed, and tightly sealed.”

“Aye, bring us a bottle, landlord, of your primest claret,” said Albert, “we shall relish a good stoup of wine after our journey; and see my men well provided with good suppers, and your stoutest home-brewed: the night falls in

chill and dreary, and they need to be well regaled. Whose health may I pledge?" turning courteously to the outlaw, and filling up a goblet of wine.

"To the wayfarer, so please you, my lord; for though it may seem somewhat uncourteous, I risk not my name in publics; and though I might assume a traveller's privilege, I rarely feign one. May be, when we become better acquainted, you will smile to learn mine."

"Well then, to the wayfarer! and in quaffing such a pledge, I drink to mine own prosperity as well as thine."

"Success, then, to the people of the road, my good lord!" cried the outlaw, laughing, "whether they be on foot or on horseback. Lieth your road to the capital, fair sir?"

"Aye, Sir Unknown, through the wilds of Epping Forest."

"I have heard, too," observed Wilfred, fixing his dark eye on the outlaw, "that the robber spies frequent all the inns verging on the forest

—cunning men, who can pass well in any guise. The frock of the honest farmer, and the leathern doublet of the grazier, may be fitted on the person of the highway marauder. Perhaps you failed to remark those quiet people, with their hats pulled over their brows, who passed awhile since from this room—they are not what they would seem.”

“Indeed, sir esquire, it is not my wont to note the frequenters of publicks. I am a man of peace, as you may perceive by my dress, travelling on mine own private affairs to London.”

“I know not, neither do I care,” said Lord Albert; “whoever you may be, Sir Unknown, you know right well the points of a good horse, and can discourse skilfully on such matters. Welcome are you to the wine-cup, be you outlaw or peaceful wayfarer. We must not be too fond to inquire or suspect a traveller and passing companion. Fill up your glass, and drink to the health of her you love best. Here’s to our Kedington lasses, Wilfred.”

“With all my heart,” said young Conyers, emptying his glass for the first time to the inspiring toast; and rising, he made his excuse to look after the men and horses. “Farewell, Sir Unknown; I doubt not we shall meet again.”

“A shrewd youth that esquire of yours, my lord, but rather too suspiciously given. My thanks have you for your generous entertainment. I must be off betimes, and the night advanceth apace. Should we meet again, I shall endeavour to requite your hospitality. A fair journey to you!”—and the outlaw passed into the large kitchen of the Keys.

“Are the followers of the young lord, Master Fairweather, bestowed in the stable-lofts?” said the outlaw to mine honest host of the hostel.

“Aye, are they, and well have I plied them with stout home-brewed. Soundly will they sleep; and the venom might be taken from their barkers, and they none the wiser. But you must heed that acute young esquire: I like not the rolling of his eye; he is over-watchful, and

you must e'en abide till he is soundly rested. It is well he sleeps within the house."

"Send over to the Chequers when he is housed --three whistles for a signal. I had my own thoughts about that young blood."

The outlaw, it will be perceived, had a very perfect understanding with mine host of the Keys, who shared largely in many important captures, made the more secure through the knowledge which the freebooters frequently obtained of the strength and consequence of their victims at his house, which was much used by the nobility and gentry of the eastern counties on their way to the capital, who could little suspect that the jovial landlord of the Keys was in league with the blades of the road.

When Master Walter joined his comrades, who were carousing at the Chequers, he directed Ruffian Bill, as he was called, whom we have before noticed, to be in readiness to accompany himself in a nightly adventure; and when mine host of the Keys sounded his signal whistle,

the two outlaws sallied forth and found easy admittance into the stable-yard. Concealing a dark lantern under a cloak, they mounted a ladder, and made good their entrance into the loft, where the retainers snored away soundly the fatigues of the day. Cautiously opening one glimmering side of the dark lantern, Ruffian Bill held the light, while the more expert Walter, one by one, quietly deprived the pistols of the followers of their dangerous munition; and having accomplished the sagacious design of neutralizing the resistance of the party, they rode away to the borders of Epping Forest, to form their ambuscade against the unsuspecting travellers.

It was early when Wilfred Conyers mustered the stout retainers, and they were all mounted and ready to move when Lord Albert sprung upon his roan hackney, and gave the signal to move.

“It will be well, my lord,” said Wilfred,

“to show you the kind intentions and slight-

of-hand of our companion of last night; the smooth-tongued Sir Unknown better judged, may be, than he suspected, or could wish. We shall, however, have an opportunity of showing him a little Suffolk foresight. Hand me your pistol, Will Thursby; and when you sleep at a hostel, learn to guard your arms somewhat better," said Wilfred, firing the innocuous pistol at the head of the alarmed and astonished follower, who reined back his horse, and reeled in the saddle from the sudden shock of the discharge, while Lord Albert and the followers uttered a cry of alarm. "There is no danger, my lord," said Wilfred, smiling calmly; "the Unknown would feign have led us into captivity under easy odds, for you see he has effectually conjured away the deathful metal from the pistols of the followers, during their all-oppressive slumbers: I had my suspicions, and satisfied myself this morning before I ventured on the experiment you have witnessed. It will be fitting the followers reload, for the outlaws, who, I take

it, we shall meet to-day, with Sir Unknown at their head, expect doubtless that we are delivered over bound into their hands."

"It is likely they do so, my gallant esquire, but we shall prove a more dangerous than valuable capture. Charge your pistols again, my brave lads, and look ye guard them more carefully for the future."

When Lord Albert approached the skirts of Epping Forest, he gave strict orders, in case of an attack, that none should use their arms until a given signal, but that they should be prompt for action; satisfying himself that the priming of his pistols was dry, he rode at the head of his followers with Wilfred, while the retainers closed up ready to support their lord. Echoing through the deep solitude of the forest, a faint bugle note was heard, and immediately after, issuing from a narrow ride, and in formidable array across the main road, a dozen of fierce, wild-looking outlaws, headed by the famed

Master Walter, drew up and summoned Lord Albert to pay the dues of the greenwood.

“It is well, Sir Unknown,” said Lord Albert, drawing a pistol from his holster; “and ably will I confess did you plan our defenceless capture. But, thanks to the shrewd suspicions of my trusty esquire, you are foiled for this once, and if you let us not pass free of your forest, we shall pay our dues in leaden coin, and force ourselves the way. Young Soame, show these outlaws that I make no vain boast. And the young yeoman, levelling his pistol at the trunk of an adjoining tree, buried the ball deep into the branching bough of a gnarled oak. Our numbers are equal,” continued Lord Albert, “and our hands and hearts are strong; it will be but a dear and bloody-bought booty you will win from us.”

“It is not the wont of us outlaws,” said Master Walter, “to enter into a dubious struggle; and since I perceive you are prepared,

and forward for a combat, through the wise discernment of yon palid-featured youth, whose young head is fitted for older shoulders, I would fain ye would pass with the free will and proffered hospitality, if ye will so far honour us, of the lords of this forest, which we arrogate to ourselves often with good right. Our hiding-place in the greenwood is near at hand, and we fear not to trust to the honour of a Barnadiston. Gladly would I repay the courtesy of yester eve's entertainment; and I pledge the faith of our order that ye shall be free of the forest."

"A bargain, Sir Unknown," said Lord Albert, "we will bide your entertainment, and follow to your trysting tree."

Turning down one of the deepest recesses of the forest, the outlaws were soon lost amidst a narrow and gloomy bridle-way, which permitted but one horse to advance at a time, so that the party of Lord Albert and the outlaws wound along for nearly an hour in a single file, till at

a note of the bugle, the band of the robbers issued on an open space of velvet turf, beneath the wide-spreading branches of a stately oak, which stretched its branching honours, divested of its sheltering foliage, over a sort of grassy platform, affording a fair and level piece of ground to draw up a party of horsemen, and commanding the gorge of the forest, which might be held against an hundred armed men. The outlaw chief smiled when Lord Albert issued from the pass, and courteously doffing his cap, he proffered a fair welcome.

“ You will observe, my lord, you are among us, and in our power, for we could now cut off your followers, singly and successively, taken at odds as they come up. But fear not, you have the pledge of an outlaw ; and who would dare to impugn the given word of the men of the greenwood ? ”

“ I doubt not your honour ; and so confident am I that you harbour no ill intentions towards me, that I shall send on my followers,

retaining only my trusty esquire. Will Thursby and Soame, you will ride on," said Lord Albert, "with the men to Woodford, and await my coming on the morrow. And since my retainers are but strange in this country, brave outlaw, it will be well to send forward some of your forest-rangers with them."

"That will I. Hie ye there; mount half-a-dozen of ye, and ride forward with the noble's train, even unto Woodford. And look ye, my lads, I will make ye answerable for their safe conduct. Your horses shall be tended in the stabling of the cavern, and I will be proud to welcome ye, and even your shrewd esquire, to the dwelling of the branded and hunted outlaw, against whom is the hand of every man raised, and whose sympathies are shared not, nor elevated, by the kindly smile of woman. It is a life, my lord, which has been forced upon me, and is foreign to my nature; but I console myself that my influence over the wild men I command—a voluntary elevation—is exerted to spare

the effusion of blood ; and since my chieftainship, no blood hath stained the greenwood, nor has the cry of defenceless woman been heard on the night air ; yet were I taken to-morrow, my body would swing on the gibbet, and the birds of prey would wanton on my decaying corse. But I am free from crime, while the villain wretch who has reduced me to this line of life, lives on, and is honoured because he has acted within the pale of the law, and has robbed me of my patrimony under the hallow of a name, and the corrupt protection of a court—a cowardly swindler, cloaked under the knowledge of chicanery and lawful plunder.”

“ It is strange, however,” said Lord Albert, “ that our impartial and purely administered laws, the peculiar boast of a Briton, should not have secured you from so fraudulent an usurpation as you would insinuate.”

“ My story, my lord, shall convince you that the pure laws of the Briton may be rendered far more impure than the decrees of an eastern

despot. I am the only son of reputable parents, who once possessed property in the county of Sussex; my mother died when I was an infant, and my father, inconsolable for her loss, sailed with Raleigh, and fell, fighting his ship gallantly, when Drake tamed the pride of the Armada. I was left an orphan, and the charge of me devolved on a sole relation,—my uncle,—who had been bred up to the profession of the law, and had long superintended the affairs of his confiding brother; upon whose death he came down to Bignor, discharged all the servants, and carried me away, a youth of fourteen, to a gloomy house in Holborn-lane, at the top of which he assigned me a small, cold attic, and the coarsest fare. I rarely saw my uncle, and when I did so, he seemed to gleam upon me with the malignity of the arch fiend. My only companion was a servant, who had been long in the service of my uncle, and who had, probably from habit, caught his morose manner and forbidding coun-

tenance. John Clement, such was the name of this creature, attended me at all my meals, accompanied me in my walks, and slept in an adjoining room. He was a powerful and athletic man, with a low forehead, large shaggy eye-brows, and a most ill-favoured visage; and I soon perceived it would be vain to think of an escape, which I had early premeditated, unless I could win over this surly myrmidon of my uncle's. I submitted myself to his humours, and gratified his vanity by the praise I bestowed upon his Herculean qualities, on which he greatly prided himself.

One morning he brought home a pair of foils, and, being a very expert fencer, he commenced, more to vary the monotony of his own existence, than for my advantage, to give me lessons in fencing. I professed great gratitude for his kindness to me; and as I was soon sufficiently proficient to afford him ample exercise, he frequently put the foils under his arm, or directed me to bear them to some lone fields, within the limits of

our walk. Under his tuition I became a very perfect fencer; but having made up my mind to turn my skill to advantage in the favouring of my flight, I concealed the superiority which agility and quickness gave me in the command of my weapon, over my sinewy, powerful instructor;—indeed, rather than have recourse to a dubious conflict, I ventured once to sound him in his disposition to favour me in my escape from the hated thralldom of my uncle's house: but his surly assurance on that occasion of ‘No, no, my young master, you have mistaken John Clement; he would give up life rather than abuse the confidence reposed in him,’ taught me the requisiteness of relying upon my own firmness and courage. In the night, in the cold attic, when the hollow winds whistled through my wooden apartment, I have lain sleepless on my comfortless pallet, devising many methods of flight, but resolving on none; and God knows how long I might have continued in my thralldom, had not a bright thought

one morning entered into my head. Clement had directed me to carry the foils, and we walked to a large waste of land on the outskirts of the town, where, fortunately, no one was scarcely ever to be met with; the day was gloomy, and dark clouds flitted over the face of the heavens, settling above the mighty city, and enveloping it in a dense fog of supernatural darkness: every thing seemed to favour me, and when Clement took his usual stand, and demanded the foils, I snapped off the button-guards of both, and throwing him the weapon, bid him defend himself. ‘I have been long enough dogged by your footsteps, you villain, and enthralled by the wickedness of a tyrannical uncle, but this moment either renders me free, or a captive to your sword.’”

“‘The last shall you be, young crocodile, and I will bind you down within the iron clench of these arms, and may be, hug you to the death!’ and the ruffian endeavoured to run in on me to effect his purpose; but I repelled him by a

slight wound over the eye. His passion then towered to the utmost ; and, foaming with mad rage, he advanced upon me with a fell cry, of ‘Curse ye, you young viper ! but I will draw your venomous life-blood.’ We fought long and fiercely. Clement was a perfect master of his weapon, and was a muscular, active man ; but his passion afforded me advantage at odds : I was cool, fighting for life and liberty ; and I watched and parried the home lunges of my adversary, without throwing away a chance, till I saw him unsteady and blown ; I then put forth my agility, my blood rose, and the pride of my daring urged me rapidly forward. I bore hard upon him ; and as he retired, faintly parrying my thrusts, I shouted with joy, and lunging in home, I felt my sword pass through the body of my nervous adversary. He stood a moment, groaned deeply, and fell back dead to the earth. I gazed with immoveable awe on the prostrate corpse of Clement. Death had not power to destroy at once the sullen ferocity of the fea-

tures, and the fierce look of disappointed vengeance lurked on his contorted mouth and glazing eye. I fled with horror from the field, and wandered the night through. Startled at every sound, I knew not whither I bent my course ; and on the following morning I fell in with the band of outlaws. Their then chieftain compassioned my desolate state, and enrolled me among his followers. Proclamations numerous, and high rewards, were offered for the apprehension of the murderer, wherein I was foully described as an ungrateful wretch of mean parentage, who had been taken an orphan, and supported by the bounty of my uncle. Thus, in early life, through the villany of a designing and heartless relation, was I cut off from the pale of civilized society ; and, reckless of futurity, blasted in name, and disgusted with a world which could smile upon the successful arts of the poor-spirited, legal robber, I resolved to seize my share of the good things boldly and openly, on the highway, from all who might

cross my path. Fortune and daring favoured me in my new career, and on the death of the ancient captain of the band, I was lifted up on the shoulders of my fellows, (after the custom of the barbaric kings of the olden day,) and hailed as lord of this forest, and their chosen chieftain. I have found them rough, but true, and possessed of many noble qualities. Our word, my lord, is more sacred than the sealed bonds of other men; and he who traverses these wilds with the outlaw's pass is safer than the kingly messenger. Within the rude cavern of this rocky retreat are souls equal to high undertakings. We live," concluded the outlaw, "in scenes of stirring excitement; and the bugle-note which challenges our arm for combat, is often the prelude to the hangman's cord. We live without sympathies, and we die ignominiously; it is more than to be wondered at that our career is not bloodier than even the blast of calumny hath spread over it. You have entrusted yourself fearlessly to our keeping: a

near observer, may be, will confess ‘the devil is not so black as he is painted.’”

The feast of the robbers was spread in the rocky cavern of the forest; and, throwing off all reserve, Lord Albert and Wilfred adapted themselves to their humours, and bantered their wit. The presence of the chief, a person exercising a despotic sway over their community, restricted them within due bounds; and though the wine-cup flowed freely, and many were of rude and boorish origin, yet beyond loud singing and boisterous mirth, was there nothing to interrupt the conviviality of the entertainment, or offend against manners. One sung—

“ O the life of the outlaws is pleasant and sweet !

They roam where they list, and secure a retreat

Beneath the green wood, where the gnarled oak
spreads

Its broad honours to heav’n, and shelters their
heads.

What care they for laws, for churchmen, or kings ;

From all whom they can they pluck the good things ;

And profusely they scatter, with gen'rous hand,
The treasures of captives amidst the bold band.

Sing away, sing away, for outlaws, I say,
Lead right happy lives, and are merry all day.

“ When the fame of their deeds hath rung through the
land,

And the spoils of the people enrich the bold band,
They are hunted by blood-hounds, and chas'd with
fell rage,

And their names are recorded in Newgate's black
page,

Where the deeds of their darkness are all brought to
light,

Their flight, their chance capture, and desperate fight:
They are tried and condemn'd to be hung up on high;
And amidst shouts of the rabble they fearlessly die.

Sing away, sing away, for outlaws will ride,
Despite of all laws, through the forest's green
pride.”

Many were the wild songs and toasts which
enlivened the robbers' feast; and the glare of
pine torches within the cavern, glimmering on

their fierce countenances, and neglected, long hair, gave to the scene a strange, unearthly appearance, heightened by an old hag with grey hair and wrinkled visage, bearing in one hand a torch, which she flung round in unison with the chorus of the outlaws. She might have passed for the witch of Endor, or her, the Byzantine, whom the Spartan king evoked, and learned his destiny.

“Avaunt thee, witch!” cried the robbers, whenever this fearful personage approached too near them: “keep thy hoarse voice still, for a raven art thou, that croakest the death of our bravest fellows.”

“An’ if I do, hast thou ever known me wrong?” cried the hag. “Whoever dared to doubt the warning voice of Jeannie Goodchild? —nae, nae, she’s never betrayed none o’ ye! and had ye but listed to her voice, there are many would yet be here through whose hollow bones the wild winds are whistling the witches’ incantations:—forby, if yon youthful stranger would

take no offence, and the captain be agreeable, I would speak his destiny, for I hae marked his coming, and I hae learnt his fate.

“ Out with it, sorceress,” said Lord Albert ;
“ I defy all auguries ; but I would willingly hear your prophecy.”

“ When the king shall draw his sword,
To him your aid you shall afford ;
When the king is captive bound,
Your head shall roll upon the ground ;
And the bold Barnadiston name
Shall be heard no more in the field of fame.”

“ I know not where Jeannie may have heard it, but such a prophecy,” said Albert, “ has been long current among my race, who it is said are to be extinct when their king shall be a captive in his own land. Were I superstitious, such a fate, foretold to me here in the rocky cavern of an outlaw fortress, might well alarm me ; but I heed not the diviner’s inspiration in prescient futurity : my destiny is in the hands

of God ; and if I die with honour in the performance of my duties, I shall die well."

At a signal from the outlaw chief, the hag disappeared, the table was removed, and Lord Albert and his squire, stretched on pallets, slept soundly, with undisturbed consciences, and with the fullest confidence, amidst the lawless men of the greenwood.

On the resumption of his journey on the following morning, the outlaw chief accompanied Lord Albert through the forest until he rejoined his followers at Woodford, and on offering his obeisance to the young lord, he proffered his services, should circumstances ever render them availing. "Gladly would I," said Walters, "abandon my present following, could I obtain an honourable service."

"It shall not be forgotten, Walters," said Lord Albert ; "and if at any time you will repair to London, if occasion serve, my esquire shall furnish you with a recommendation to my lady mother at the hall of Barnadiston, where,

may be, some vacant warder post shall be at your service."

"My deepest thanks, my lord, for your consideration and kindness to a proscribed but unfortunate outlaw!" and turning his horse suddenly into the forest, he darted down a bridle way.

CHAPTER V.

He was a man. take him for all in all,
You ne'er shall look upon his like again.

SHAKSPEARE.

LORD ALBERT rode forward at a sharp pace. In another hour he was caracoling with his gay train through the streets of the crowded city of London; and with a wondering eye the youth surveyed the dark, gloomy abodes of men, who, from their confined offices and dingy shops, swayed half the destinies of the world; whose inventive genius and active commerce were felt in the remotest parts of the globe; and who held at command the immense influential power of wealth, which, more formidable than the sword of Camillus, disposed the balance of

Europe. The triumphant reign of Elizabeth, and the active enterprizes of Raleigh and Drake, had crippled the colossal and aspiring empire of the Spaniard; and the rich mines of Mexico and Peru, which the chivalrous courage and indomitable perseverance of Cortez, and the base daring villany of Pizarro, had secured to the land of their birth, the romantic soil of Europe, were more than eclipsed by the solid and noble foundation of an empire, which shall preserve the language and fame of its mother country when Albion shall have fallen in the wreck of empires; and her proud deeds shall inspire the eloquent genius of some Gibbon of the new world. The peaceful reign of the first James had greatly contributed to the encouragement of commerce and adventure; and the country, shaking off the trammels and remnants of feudal institutions, was rapidly advancing to assume that high rank among the nations, which nature, and the enterprising spirit of its people, entitled it to hold. At

the time we speak of the city of London might be called large, but singularly frightful: the houses were mostly of wood, crowded into narrow and zigzag streets, and so lofty, that the blessed light of day could scarcely be said to afford its beneficent rays to the pale unearthly-looking citizens, who glided with rapid steps through some of the frightful purlieus. The architecture, if we may make use of the term to such a heaping together of homely buildings, was an admixture of Gothic and Saxon, and, may be, some remnants of the old Roman everlasting work, erected when Lugdunum was the centre of the conquered and remote province of Britain.

The line of heavy wooden piled buildings, sooted with the smoke of ages, extended along Holborn, even unto St. Paul's, which was in those days undistinguished from the surrounding rude buildings, save from its superior size and revered sanctity; for the most part being faced with wood, covered in with lead, it was not

then, as it has since become, one of the chiefest and most imposing temples of the Christians—which, in the bloom of unsullied freshness, soars, in stupendous grandeur and striking magnificence, above the dingy and tasteless edifices that pollute, with their presence, its splendid shrine; its vast dome exciting the admiration and wonder of the travelling stranger from afar, who perhaps confesses with a sigh, that the sublime and soaring genius of one man hath elevated, among the tasteless Britons, a temple worthy of the great God, and surpassing the Ephesian's miracle, or St. Sophia's glittering pile echoing the chaunted musical cry of the muezzin, rivalling, and in many points of architecture excelling, St. Peter's, the pride of the christian world.

Issuing from the bar of the Temple, Albert rode on through the wider and more regular brick-faced buildings, which were spreading fast along the Strand beyond the immense pile of Somerset House, towards the village of Charing, where the palace of the proud Percy

then stood in solitary grandeur; from whence but a short time previous, the acerbated Earl released from the Tower, and wrathful with the court, had, in vain pomp and worldly haughtiness, sallied forth in his state carriage drawn by eight horses, to show off before the citizens of London his superior grandeur over the favourite Buckingham. Near the stately mansion of the proud peer, Albert was met by Sir Philip Maulerever, his kinsman, who kindly welcomed him to the capital, and pointed out to him a commodious quarter which had been engaged for him and his attendants within a convenient distance of the Palace of St. James, nearly within Privy Gardens—the choice resort of all the young nobility and gallants of the court, and where maskers and revellers greatly frequented. Wilfred Conyers, with the retainers, repaired thither at once, while Lord Albert accompanied his kinsman to his apartments in the palace, which he held by virtue of an honourable office near the person of the king.

Sir Philip Maulerever was a middle aged, stout and hardy looking cavalier, with little of the courtly manner about him, which might have been expected from one whose attendance was continually upon kings. In early life, he had been engaged in a few campaigns in the Low Countries, where he had served with the celebrated Maurice, in the war of Dutch liberation, and had observed, with the curious eye of a warrior and accomplished soldier, the famed generalship of the two celebrated Italians, Sforza Duke of Parma, and the accomplished Spinola. He had subsequently returned to his native country, and upon the accession of James the First he formed part in the cavalcade of the English nobles and gentry who accompanied their new king, in his progress from the sister-kingdom, through the heart of merry England.

From that period, Sir Philip Maulerever had held some situation which kept him near the person of the loquacious king, who loved those qualities of courage and soldiership in another,

which it has been supposed he did not himself possess ; or which perhaps the fearful scenes of his early youth had completely neutralized.

No courtier held bolder language, or more free, than did Sir Philip Maulerever, and he was accounted by far the most skilful in the art of war, and the most gallant warrior at the court of James the First ; besides which, he was a keen sportsman, and would discourse in wise terms, upon all the qualities and tempers of hawks, horses, and hounds, on which the king loved much to descant, and wherein, it must be confessed, he was well versed.

From Sir Philip Maulerever, Albert learnt much of the characters and qualities of the personages who held sway in the court and over the kingdom ; and more particularly of the state of parties, and the rising genius of Puritanism, whose leaders were men of capacious minds, firm purpose, and upright patriotism. “ Although the episcopalian priesthood are highly established in this kingdom, and are strongly

upheld by the crown, whose supremacy and divine authority, it is their wont vociferously to support, yet is the nation greatly moved by the tenets of the apostle of Geneva, and by the eloquent preaching and writings of his disciples, Cartwright and the celebrated Philip de Mornay, whose admonitions and discourses have made a solid impression on our thoughtful and superstitious countrymen,—for greatly as they may scorn the charge, the English nation have ever been superstitiously and bigotedly given: though fond of, and prone to, the profession of new doctrines, they are jealous and sanguinary towards the destruction of the old. Look to the fanatical, cold-blooded hatred which the mass of the people bear towards the Romanists. It is not long since that the chaplain of my Lord of Norfolk was seized by the infuriate rabble, and borne towards one of the bridges; and had it not been for the prompt interposition of a few cavaliers, who boldly drew their swords upon the dastards, the poor priest would have met either a watery grave,

or been torn to pieces by the raging monster of the thousand heads—the sovereign people, forsooth, as those humble-looking, straight-haired, meek preachers are continually ringing from their pulpits. These are all fearful signs of the times, of mighty changes in the opinions and temper of a nation. All is calm at present, but to me it seems the deceitful prelude to some mighty storm about to race over the land of our birth. It will be well, my Lord Albert, not to display with too much pomp your adherence to the faith of Rome; for although it be secretly favoured by the princes of the house of Stuart, who uphold all the ceremonial and vestments of the ancient worship, though they have outwardly condemned the form of prayer, the confessional, and other relics of the old church; yet would it not be wise to be pricked down as a malignant (for such is the name assigned to your people) in the black proscription list of the Precisians, or Puritans, as they are more commonly termed: they are a very rising party, who will work themselves into the seats of

power, if they be not opportunely scotched. But the vanity of the favourite Buckingham, and the irresolution of the Prince of Wales, who completely sway the councils of our weak king, are no match for the shrewdness and determination of the sectarians;—even now are they bent on some wild scheme of a journey to Spain, as if it were not the maddest act to carry abroad the sole heir of England's crown, and place him within the power of her most implacable foe. Who shall say what hard conditions may not be exacted for his release? Many of the young nobility are caballing to accompany the young prince; and I would fain recommend you to form one of his suite. If so be that such recommendation find favour in your sight, I will secure your welcome with the prince."

Lord Albert expressed himself most desirous of availing himself of the offers of his kinsman; and the rather, that his lady mother had pointedly enjoined him to attach himself to the person of the Prince of Wales; as also he would

have the opportunity of studying the character of Buckingham, and forming a close intimacy with Adrian de Walden, of whom he made inquiry of Sir Philip Maulerever.

“Humph,” said the blunt cavalier, “opinion varies so much upon the character of that young man, that you have tasked my judgment. He came to court a raw youth, handsome, modest, and of a thoughtful cast; seldom was he seen, and it was a matter of much wonderment that the heir of the ancient and proud De Waldens should be content with the service of a single page, and should live secluded and little known in a humble lodgment of some city merchant. It was said he read much; and his countenance showed an intellectual mind, though there was an expression of haughty irony and sneering contempt on the curl of his lip, which bespoke to my mind a superciliousness and self-sufficiency, not commendable in a youth. It was said he excelled in every thing he undertook; and I remember once to have seen him enter the court-yard of the palace and tilt at the

ring with the truest precision that ever I beheld, amidst shouts, waving of handkerchiefs, and loud plaudits, which he regarded no more than the idle wind that passed by. Scornfully did he survey the gay groups who gratulated his skill; and coldly passed he forth, scarcely doffing his cap to majesty's self. But of late he is much in company with my Lord of Buckingham, and will doubtless accompany the Prince of Wales, who favours him mightily, in his projected journey. He is possessed of great talent; but there is something dark and mysterious about him, which belikes me not, though, may be, it is no more than his natural disposition; and I would be sorry to 'set down aught in malice' against him."

Lord Albert thanked his kinsman for the sketch he had given him of the court, and the state of parties; and on returning to his lodgings, he desired Wilfred to see that the missives were delivered with which he had been entrusted, to the family of Granville, as also that to

Adrian, Lord de Walden. And in the course of the following day he received the visits of his kinsmen, who warmly welcomed him to the town. At the usual hour he had equipped himself for his first lounge along the Mall, when a handsome, gaily dressed youth, with a dark, saturnine complexion, and eye of darker fire, yet strangely subdued, appalled in the highest fashion of the age—in a yellow silken vest, profusely ornamented with points and ruffles of the richest lace, and wearing over his shoulder a crimson scarf, which sustained a highly-finished steel-basketed rapier, entered unceremoniously, and unannounced, into his room, and holding forth his hand,—“It is not necessary, I have to hope,” he said, “that Lord Albert Barnadiston thinks the formality of an introduction requisite to Adrian de Walden. Connected, you know, we are through some generations of county marriages; and our neighbourhood and exchange of good offices must make us old friends almost as soon as we are new. I per-

ceive you are equipped in your bravery; and if it will suit your mind we will take a stroll among the gay gallants and fair dames who throng and swell along the Mall in all their finery; they, and their hopes, fears, and intrigues are well known to me; and I will point out all those of mark and quality worthy to be noticed."

While he thus spoke, Albert surveyed, with an inquiring glance, the countenance of the handsome youth, whose open frankness won greatly on his nature. He united to an outline of the most regular features, an elegance and lightness of shape that promised the union of extraordinary agility and unyielding strength; his complexion showed dark, and the glossy ringlets of his raven hair, worn after the fashion of the gayest cavaliers, with the effeminate love-lock flowing adown his left cheek, and shading part of his manly throat, waved gracefully over his polished and expressive brow, and laid in rich luxuriance adown his symmetrical shoulders.

His eyes were of the darkest lustral black ; an aquiline nose, and teeth of transcendent pearly whiteness ;—but it was the mouth, the varied play of the beautiful and expressive mouth,—the uncontrollable muscle which betrayeth the innate passions of the soul, despite of all governance, and unerringly marks the character of the face, when we vainly seek to trace the inmost recesses of the mind on the calm commanding forehead, or in the glance of the subdued eye. It was the unrepressible and lurking devil that played round the smiling mouth of Adrian de Walden that told volumes of the stormy feelings and vindictive nature of the heart shrowded beneath the false gaiety that played around his lips. It was not often that the demoniac expression, the revealing of an unforgiving and vindictive spirit, could be traced ; but once suddenly portrayed, it could never again be banished from the memory of the beholder ; it threw a proud and withering glance on one of the most perfect of God's likenesses—

like to the melancholy and beautifully painful countenance of the fallen angel, when he sat in synod, amidst the rebelling spirits—what time Sin “out of his head a goddess armed she sprung.” The curl of the tell-tale mouth caught the observation of Albert, who ever after felt ill at ease, and almost rebuked, under the spirit of the gay and humorous Adrian.

But the enlivening scene upon the Mall, and the world of novelty that burst upon the sight of the youthful and open-hearted Barnadiston, together with the descriptions of various court ladies, whose characters came forth with a brilliancy of colouring under the plastic humour of the satiric De Walden, soon made him forget, for the time, the unpleasant emotions which the countenance of Adrian had raised up in his mind; the more so, as that strange being seemed to be quite aware of the unfavourable impression which he had excited, and which, by the exertion of his uncommon talents to amuse, he successfully endeavoured to erase. Pressing

the arm of Albert, he directed his attention to a lovely, commanding looking lady, in the prime of beautiful womanhood, arrayed in a rich black velvet dress, with a sweeping train, upheld by two pages, who came adown the Mall, surrounded with a throng of persons, evidently of the first consequence. Adrian de Walden stepped aside, and doffing his cap, bowed almost servilely, while the fair creature cast upon him one of her envied and most bewitching smiles. He continued to gaze intently after her, apparently absorbed in some spirit-stirring reflection. Proud ! oh, but how beautiful !—so clever, and yet so politic withal ! And again Albert remarked the fiend-like expression of the countenance which passed away as De Walden pointed to the vanishing lady. “ There, my young Lord Barnadiston, if you would desire to meet all the bright spirits of the age and of every country—if you would wish to be familiar with all the secrets of the council-board, and of the presence chamber—even would you seek to

ferret out the political intrigues of the puritanical patriots,—court seduously, boldly, unceasingly,—court Lucy Percy, Countess of Carlisle. Mark with what an air she sweeps the Mall; and yon train of high-born men are no common following: far does she eclipse every dame of the court; and he who hath not the free entrance into the envied circle and chamber of the Countess of Carlisle, ‘the Erynnis of the times,’ can never be a fellow of any mark or likelihood. Even the princely Buckingham flatters her, and the mighty genius of Strafford yields her homage. You shall be presented to her; and since she has again turned down the Mall, I will procure you a most honourable introduction, full in the centre of the admiring throng.”

Albert would have declined such a marked exposure, but before he could demur, Adrian de Walden had hurried him into the centre of the train of the Countess of Carlisle, and in the midst of the glittering ring of gallants he made

a courteous obeisance to the beautiful queen of the splendid circle, and begged to introduce "Master Albert Barnadiston, and one of the chiefest persons, noble lady, of our eastern borders."

"Welcome are you," said the beautiful Countess, with her sweetest smile, to Lord Albert; "and much honoured am I, fair sir, in the acquaintance of the heir of the noble and chivalrous Barnadiston. We know of none, my Lord of Buckingham," turning round to that magnificent peer, "none are there of our ancient English feudal nobility more true and untainted than the renowned Barnadiston. I would recommend him to your favour were it only for the blood of his line. But the friend of Adrian de Walden, my lord," continued the lady, with a significant look, "needs no introduction to your grace."

"None, indeed, fair lady. De Walden is my glass wherein I dress myself, and whatever he reflecteth is pleasing to my sight. But here,"

he said, advancing to Albert, and offering him his hand, "no commendation were required, for honoured do I hold myself in thus early forming the acquaintance of Lord Barnadiston, whose presence at court has long been looked for."

To be thus distinguished, and in so marked a manner, by the leading and fairest beauty of the court, and the powerful favourite of the king, was an honourable exception which befel but few; and as Lord Albert followed in the train of the Countess of Carlisle, the young and aspiring courtiers already, in fancy's vision, beheld the future favourite of kings and princes. While the young nobility gathered around him, and welcomed with manly frankness their young compeer.

Having paid the requisite homage, Adrian de Walden took the arm of Albert, and walking through the Spring Gardens, made the best of his way to the stately palace of York House, at that time occupied by the vain pride of

Buckingham. The court yard was filled with pampered menials and fierce brawlers in the liveries and badges of Villiers, who were able to discern, with a turn of the eye, where insolence would pass current, or where cringing servility was needed. When the free and bold step of De Walden pressed the broad marble staircase, the fawning sycophants strove to outvie each other in servility, bowing low, smirking, and proffering to bear the caps and plumes of the young lords.

“Stand back, ye knaves,” cried De Walden. “Send up that little varlet, Palikar, my page; and bid him lay covers for two in my private apartments; and recollect I am at home to none, not even to his Grace of Buckingham.”

When De Walden had secured the door of the apartment, he desired Albert to seat himself near a small round table, covered with papers; some carefully folded and laid together, while others appeared to have been undergoing the work of revision; and carelessly flung on

a silken couch, might be seen the works of Machiavel. Taking up a volume,—“This,” said De Walden, “is my political gospel; and the master-mind of the Italian, which shines forth in these pages, yet vindicates the memory and superior intellectual capacities of the most memorable people of the world, the old conquering Romans, whose surpassing spirit glimmers forth often, but solitary, amidst their gifted descendants. *Italy!* land of beauty, cradle of reviving learning, birth-place of music, and soul of glorious painting, and the sole surviving relic of a shattered and mighty empire—how art thou fallen!—beneath the armed heel and fierce passions of the children of thine own bosom!—beneath the cold, calm cruelties of the Venetian oligarchy, the damnable and degrading superstition of Christ’s vicars, and the bloody contentions of the Neri and Bianchi, the Buol-delmonti and Agostini!—fallen, too, under the feeble sceptres of merchant-dukes, and the insulting scorn of the barbarous Alemanni! Can

it be, that the land which produced him who 'came, and saw, and conquered!'—and the long line of warrior heroes of the race of the Samnite, the Lucanian, the Latin, and the fiery Volscian, who bore and planted the conquering eagle, consular or imperial—the standard that swept over half the world—upon the banks of the Euphrates and the Jordan, amidst the deserts of the Arabs and on the bleak hills of the Caledonians;—can it be that she has become the apple of discord among the barbarians, and that her fair fields are the arena of combat to the volatile Frank, the proud Spaniard, and the heavy German?—fallen, indeed, from her ancient glory, yet replete with the seeds of the mightiest spirits, who start forth, with indignant superiority, either on shore or at sea, in politics, in arts as in arms, asserting the unequalled blood that gallops through their veins. '*Italy!* Time, which hath wronged thee, with ten thousand rents of thine imperial garment, shall deny, and hath denied, to every other sky,

spirits which soar from ruin,' 'conquerors on shore and on the far wave.' Look to her painters, her poets, her generals—the masters of modern war, and the choice leaders of the imperial armies,—and he, the calm and patient-minded Genoese, who found a new world to enrich the old. Sunk in the scale of political existence, drunk with glory, debased by luxury, unnerved by the arts of Dioclesian, and irreparably injured by the vanity of Constantine, Rome imperial sunk powerless before the arms of the Gothic conqueror; while the weak and cowardly descendants of Theodosius held a precarious sway over the marshes of Ravenna, the fierce bands of the Goths, the predatory incursions of the Vandals, the genius of Narses, the heroism of Belisarius, and the fiery valour of Totila, insulted, or averted the destinies of the "Niobe of nations;"—while havoc destroyed the garden of the vine and olive, and decay, with its withering finger, crept over shattered columns and falling temples, till the ivy, sacred

to the fame of “by-gone ages,” clung in fondness to the massy walls and lone pillars, the sole and affecting memorials of the grandeur, the genius, the opulence, and taste of a mighty and conquering people !”

De Walden had unconsciously arisen from his seat, and paced the apartment, under the excitement of feelings created by such recollections ; but once more he proceeded in a calm manner :—“ I have brought you here, Albert, to make you an offer, which my mother’s letter, and the old connexions of our families, warrant me to do. There is no longer any doubt of the Spanish journey which my Lord of Buckingham has persuaded the Prince of Wales to undertake ; and a promise towards which has been exacted from the alarmed king with great difficulty. The impetuous mind of the favourite is bent upon this mad scheme, whereby he hopes completely to establish his influence over the weak and irresolute spirit of Prince Charles, that he may supersede all the authority of the

wise councillors of his father; and on the accession of the prince to the crown, which, from the failing health of the king, may not be distant, to rule with undisputed sway over the councils of this nation: besides, he has a deeper game to play, and a more fell purpose than is apparent to the eye—Buckingham hates, from the soul, Digby Earl of Bristol, who has been the chief promoter of the Spanish match, and to whom all the honour will accrue should it come to pass—which it never will, though it should bring the head of the favourite to the block. Vindictive and unforgiving is Buckingham, and he will foil and disgrace the Earl of Bristol, a nobleman of high integrity and of fair purpose. My mother saith, Albert, that you would desire to attach yourself to the prince: the following will be strictly small, perhaps not beyond two, with a few attendants. There may be some difficulty; but since I am especially attached to Buckingham, I think to have influence to sanction your proceeding in

the journey, should your inclinations so favour. To-morrow you will, of course, be presented to the king and prince. Who of the nobility will usher you to the presence chamber?"

"Not precisely any titled noble, De Walden; but my own kinsman, a tried warrior, Sir Philip Maulerever," said Albert: "but I cannot, much as I would desire to be in the company of the Prince of Wales, reconcile it to myself to be mixed up in the party and in the secret confidence of any noble, who can wildly plot the ruin of an upright and faithful servant of the crown, such as the Earl of Bristol has approved himself; and who doth not hesitate to thwart even the wishes of his king, who has honoured him too far with his implicit confidence, —purely for the gratification of some violent animosity and personal dislike;—such a noble, Adrian de Walden," said Albert, colouring with indignation, "is a disgrace to the coronet or patent which has elevated him above his fellow-citizens."

“Such sentiments, my Lord Albert, are mighty well and proper,” said De Walden, in his calm, imperturbable manner; “very meet and highly becoming are they to a youth, raw from the country, and reared up with nice notions of honourable feelings; but they are ill-suited to the atmosphere of a court. He who wishes to prosper, amidst that splendid circle of intrigue, of falsehood, and of gorgeous pageantry, must school his mind to habits of duplicity, and dress his face in smiles, though contempt play round his heart;—he must embrace decidedly some struggling party, and do all in his power to secure its ascendancy, or he will be disregarded by all: and to my thinking, and sure do I say so, because not only I wish you well, but I would we hunted up the same path, it is safer and wiser to adhere to the predominating and rising power, that which is, and will be more so,—the Lord of Buckingham’s, whose star soars into the ascendant. Judge ye, would *I* enlist in his ranks without good cause

and deep consideration?—no, no! the secret and real spring of the actions of a minister are often touched by an unseen and daring hand, who moves the chief puppet of the state; and the proud, repulsive peer of the cabinet bows down, in his own closet, in humble deference to the sway of a master-mind. I care not to conceal from you that I am not scrupulous to use any ladder that shall offer steps for my ascent to the goodly and towering tree of ambition, whose head aspireth to the clouds, and round whose trunk are twined the adhesive roots of generous emulation, fierce hatred, and fell revenge. Like Iago, ‘I follow only to serve my turn on those who may do me service; always keeping my heart attending on myself, and throwing but shows of service on my patrons.’ When Buckingham hath fallen,—and fall he must from his own mad schemes,—think you I shall be blasted by the same blow?—no! out of his very ruin will I carve myself a way whereby to rise.”

During this conversation, Palikar the page of De Walden, entered the apartments bearing in covers for two. Albert made a sign to De Walden, who seemed to be utterly unconscious of the entrance of the page: he smiled however, and going up to the boy, who was very unceremoniously laying the dinner apparatus, "Palikar," he said, putting his finger to his own lip, and the gipsy-looking boy imitated the action of his master, and hastily placing a dumb-waiter with a bottle of wine and other requisites upon it, he ran up to Albert, and throwing open his vest with an energetic action, and a very meaning gesture, he pointed to an ivory handled curiously wrought ornamented dagger of Eastern workmanship; and paying his adoration according to the lowly form of Asiatic gracefulness, he folded his arms across his breast, and with a slow-measured step retired from the room.

"That must be a strange boy, De Walden," said Albert, "and seems very perfect in the

use of dangerous, but very intelligible language; he looks not to belong to our Western lands."

"No indeed, Albert," and a shade of deepest melancholy passed over the expressive and handsome features of De Walden. "That poor boy cometh of a race, who once trod triumphant over half the world, and whose warlike genius hath since upheld the horn of the pale crescent, in many a well-fought field against the steel-clad warriors of the cross. He was born in the heart of Anatolia, the cradle of the ancient Greek, and the red-scarfed men of Macedon, the heroes of the invincible phalanx, were his ancestors. I met with him about a year since, when curiosity and young enthusiasm carried me to the land of the once proud Ionians, with their sweeping trains; and I visited with fond rapture, the immortalized Ilian plain, and watched from the top of Ida the dashing of the 'broad Hellespont.' It was then I beheld, at Stamboul, the martial and

simple inauguration of the sultans of the warrior race of Othman ; and it was my fortune to snatch the little Palikar from the uplifted dagger of an enraged Janissary. He has since devoted himself to my person, and he herds not with menials : seldom he speaks, save in his mother-tongue to me ; but he is most apt at signs, dark with a perfect Asiatic contour ; his countenance savours of that grand model, the rather bold outline of features which looks so well in statues, and belongs only to the sages and heroes of antiquity. Were you to speak but one word of the discourse which we have held, you would scarcely be safe from the dagger of Palikar, did I not forbid the deed ; so silent and so prompt a devotee may be of service on occasion."

" He may be so to some, but never I should hope to Adrian de Walden, or any English noble, who are not yet degraded to the level of the modern Italian, or coward Greek," said Albert. " The poisoned cup, and concealed

dagger, are alike to be dreaded at their feasts; and the bosom of the dearest friend is no safeguard against a dark deed of sudden anger or smothered vengeance. God forbid such customs be introduced into our land, where we fear not to speak our enmity, and openly to right ourselves."

"Such are the ennobling sentiments, Albert, with which we start in our early career in life; a generous scorn of all mean and grovelling purposes, and a high aspiration after virtue, a pure pride, too, for the exaltation and glory of our father land; but the debasing and affected effeminacy of modern times ridiculeth all bright examples of antiquity, and the lust of wealth is the shrine at which all the fine passions of the soul are immolated. The ambition of the age soars not beyond the possession of a millionaire, and the character of a miser, or a Jew extortioner, finds more favour amongst our magnates and degenerate people, than the unbending and sterner virtues of

the patriot, or the honest but poor citizen. Wealth alone, leagued with aristocratical alliance, is the sole road to promotion and distinction in falling England; and the brave soldier who risks his life and health in baneful climes, in honourable banishment and severe service, or the hardy sailor, who spends his days amidst the storms of the ocean, find themselves slighted and spurned by the upstart and mean officials who preside over their betters. It may soon be, that to support the effeminate luxuries of the insects, who bask in the sunshine of a court, the proud rank and name of a soldier will be bartered for so many pieces of gold; and the armies of England become a regular source of traffic among her wealthier citizens, whose sons will be elevated solely from the accident of a rich father, above those whose wounds and services entitle them to a better fate than to be insulted by beardless conceited boys. Emulation will be extinguished, virtue be merely a name, while intrigue and corruption shall prosper. The arts

of dissimulation and treachery must be practised in public life, when honour is laughed at and patriotism condemned. When such sentiments predominate, we may be sure that a nation will be betrayed over to the first invader; and the absence of national spirit is the warning voice of the decay of a mighty empire. You must enter the lists of public contention, prepared to strike your adversaries with the same dirty weapons which they will employ against you. Think of that I have spoken, and believe, that in political life, the tenets of Adrian de Walden alone lead to elevation; to-morrow, in the presence, you will hear more of the journey. Adieu, and in me behold a bold exposition of practices, which hypocrisy usually conceals."

James the First, at the time we speak of, had become corpulent, and his ever ungainly figure made more so by the quilted doublet and vest which he wore, from a timidity of the assassin's dagger, of which, from youth upward, he had ever entertained a strange apprehension.

He had also become feeble on his limbs, from his mortal enemy, the gout, which showed victorious in every encounter with his shattered frame; add to which, the anxiety of a father, and a king, from the repented promise which he had reluctantly yielded to the entreaties of Prince Charles and the favourite, towards the wild Spanish journey, which had cast an additional load of care over his heavy and unintellectual countenance.

When Albert Barnadiston with his esquire, the pallid-featured Wilfred Conyers, joined Sir Philip Maulerever, the old warrior was tricked out in the costume of an Elizabethan gallant, and complimenting the young lord upon his comely appearance and dress, he mounted his horse, and caracolled with his juvenile companions to Whitehall, the beautifying and ornamenting of which the king was busily hurrying forward in fond anticipation of bequeathing a splendid abode for the darling son of his old age, and the cherished hope of Eng-

land's future glory ; little dreaming, that his hapless and unfortunate heir would be led a criminal through its chambers, and that between the noble windows of that edifice, through a rugged and unseemly aperture, a king should step forth on a scaffolding, whose head should be struck off as a traitor, affording to the world the primal and memorable example, that no rank, not even the divine right of kings, can secure an oppressive tyrant from the wrath of an offended people. The state and pomp that hedge and guard the sacred person of a king will be broken through, when the chief magistrate of a nation shall condemn the duties and oaths he has sworn to ; and some patriot Hampden, or bold Cromwell, will ever be found forward to assert the privileges of mankind, and to despise the majesty of a name.

When Sir Philip Maulerever entered the antechamber at Whitehall, it was crowded with the young nobility arrayed in their richest garbs ; and the picturesque dresses, costly jewels, and

velvet cloaks, deeply trimmed with dark furs, with the flowing white plumes of the gay courtiers, threw a brilliancy around the courtly circle. There might be seen the magnificence of Buckingham, and the simplified garments, and calm bold bearing of the young puritanical leaders, Pym, Vane, and St. John, and the proud Algernon Percy, the Northumbrian heir, with Sydney of the house of courtly Leicester: there, too, was his young and talented brother, afterwards the Lord Lisle, and Lord Deputy of Ireland for the Parliament. When the presence chamber was thrown open, and the high ministers of the crown had been admitted, Albert for the first time beheld the worn and shattered king leaning against a high velvet stuffed chair, and supported by easy cushions: he appeared feeble and care-stricken, and even the vein of pedantry in which he was used to indulge, to the utter confusion and vexation of many of the gaily trimmed courtiers, had lost its charm: no smile was seen to illumine that

sepulchral countenance, and the demon of death already sat in mockery upon the golden jewelled tiara which circled the temples of the king. On his right hand stood the Prince of Wales, in all the pride of youthful manhood, admirably set off by the dark vesture, black velvet cap and raven feather, which suited so well with his peculiar countenance, strongly expressive of melancholy, yet very indicative of resolution or obstinacy; which success might have pronounced to be heroism, but which the unfortunate events of his life, his duplicity, and strange perverseness, stamped with the brand of folly. He possessed not any winning graces, and the unfortunate impediment in his speech threw an air of ill-favour over his discourse; yet to a spectator he bore himself princely, with a noble, kingly mien, and warrior carriage. The crowd of courtiers thronged through the presence, and the names which afterwards figured in the revolutionary war—the warm supporters of prerogative and

tyranny, or the champions of equal rights and equal laws—were heard in the courtly circle of England's king. A Falkland, and a Digby ; a Fairfax, a Langdale, a Goring and a Fiennes, were successively ushered forward by the Lord Chamberlain ; and at length Sir Philip Mauleverer presented his youthful kinsman, Albert Lord Barnadiston, more especially to the king. Albert kissed respectfully the extended hand of his sovereign, and when he arose, the monarch courteously said, “ A Barnadiston is ever welcome at the court of England's king. Here, baby Charles, is a young servant of a loyal and high-born race, whom I recommend to your particular regard : the Barnadistons have ever approved themselves faithful and loyal servants of the crown.”

Albert made his obeisance to the Prince, who raised him from the ground, saying, “ I hear, my lord, from Buckingham, you are to be of our following to the Spanish court ; glad am I to have so comely and high-born

a cavalier in my train. We purpose, in all secrecy, to pursue our journey to-morrow, and we expect Adrian de Walden and yourself to be ready, awaiting us, by the evening sun, at Dover."

On his return from court to his own lodgment near the Spring Gardens, Albert Barnadiston pondered much upon the propriety of embarking in an adventure, wherein he knew a nobleman of high intent and unblemished reputation was to be sacrificed to the envy and hatred of Buckingham. But though without doubt he would have rejected the proffered invitation of Adrian de Walden, yet the personal commands of his prince were not to be slighted; nor was it a small honour that a youth, unknown to fame and unversed in the intrigues and diplomacy of courts and states, should have been selected from the glittering ring of England's brilliancy, by the heir of her jewelled diadem, to be his companion in a chivalric expedition scarcely surpassed in the annals of

romaunt. Resolving, therefore, to comply promptly with the commands of his prince, he wrote to his noble mother, and also the beloved Mary Milbank.

“ Let these letters, Conyers, be forwarded to Barnadiston Hall; and let my valise, with necessary articles for a long and rapid journey, be carried to the mansion of the Marquis of Buckingham.”

“ To the palace of the Marquis of Buckingham, my lord ! surely you do but jest ? There is in the following of that haughty peer a degradation in the eyes of most honest men—such an one, powerful as he is, and full of manly frankness and fair proportion, must not draw the heir of Barnadiston into his ruinous schemes. Think me not presumptuous and forward, my lord, in thus speaking, may be too freely, for an esquire to his suzerain—but I rather take the privilege of boyish intimacy and the familiarity of Wilfred Conyers with Albert Barnadiston.”

“ So should it ever be, Wilfred ; yet the flush of anger certainly burnt athwart my brow when the friend of my boyhood could fancy that Albert Barnadiston would suffer his name to be coupled with disgrace. No, Wilfred, I am not of the following of Buckingham, but in the immediate service of the Prince of Wales, by whose command I undertake my present expedition. But surely you are young and of little experience to pass judgment so harshly on the chief peer of the cabinet, and the favourite of both the King and Prince. Moreover, is not Adrian de Walden especially attached to my Lord of Buckingham ? ”

“ I am young, it is true, my lord ; but I have sufficient observation to have discovered already that the Marquis of Buckingham is a charlatan, empty, arrogant, and unprincipled—the equal favourite of two such opposite characters as the King and the Prince of Wales, sufficiently evince his dissimulating qualities. Besides which, my lord, he courteth popularity,

and he who wavereth only in accordance with the inclinations and senseless passions of the giddy multitude, is a man of no fixed and inflexible mind ; but, like the hollow reed in the marsh, that bendeth to the passing blast ; he who clingeth unto such a one relieth on a bruised token. With respect to my Lord de Walden, he is a character deeply to be pondered—possessed of extraordinary talents, combined with an inordinate ambition, steady and persevering, vindictive and remorseless. He is to be admired, yet feared ; indolent by nature, and prone to sensuality, yet with a mind capable, at will, of shaking off the fetters of habit. He can rouse himself, like Gallienus, from the silken couch of pleasure, and come upon mankind with commanding qualities ; and although apparently he may seem the creature of Buckingham, he is his absolute master—a friend where friendship interfereth not with rivalry and ambition, but a bitter enemy, fierce as the blast of the simoom to all who may thwart his purpose.”

“To my thinking, Wilfred, you have judged rightly of De Walden, and therefore will you wonder the more that he should be my immediate companion in my present undertaking. But be assured that Albert Barnadiston will never suffer himself to be led into any act derogatory to his honour. I wear a sword sharp enough to wreak a wrong on the proudest peer of this realm. Let my valise be dispatched at once to Somerset House. I leave London this evening, and I hope we may meet soon, perhaps on a foreign shore.”

CHAPTER VI.

Hushed in the din of tongues, on gallant steeds,
With milk-white crest, gold spur, and light poised
lance;

Four cavaliers prepare for vent'rous deeds,
And, lowly bending to the lists, advance ;
Rich are their scarfs, their chargers featly prance,
If in the dangerous game they shine to-day,
The crowd's loud shout, and ladies' lovely glance.

Best prize of better acts they bear away,
And all that kings or chiefs e'er gain their toils repay.

CHILDE HAROLD. Canto I.

IN the disguise of two private individuals, travelling on their own particular business, did the heir of England's crown, and his mad aspiring favourite, pass over into France with but Adrian de Walden and Albert in their

train. They sped on rapidly through Boulogne, Abbeville, and Beauvais, at which last town the ingenuity of De Walden was called for in order to deceive two Germans, who recognized Prince Charles and Buckingham despite of their disguise and assumed names. The foreigners were at the hotel, and in the public room where the Prince and his attendants were partaking of refreshments; and they eyed with an impertinent curiosity the noble party:—
“ Mais bien c’est le Marquis de Buckingham et celui avec la figure longue et le menton fort prononcé assurément c’est le Prince de Galles; il n’y a pas de doute. Je me rappelle d’avoir vu tous deux à Newmarket,” said one to his companion; a discourse ominous, and sure to lead to discovery if allowed to proceed. But De Walden at once entered into conversation with the two inquisitive and observant foreigners.

“ Pray, gentlemen, do you happen to have been struck with the remarkable similitude,” pointing to the Prince and Buckingham, “ that these

two goodly honest personages bear to the Prince of Wales and the Marquis of Buckingham?"

"Why, most undoubtedly, sir, we have," said one of the Germans; "and further are we sure it is de Prince, and my Lord Buckingham, for we did see them both very often at the Newmarket, and they are not every-day faces; it is not for such as us, however, to make remarks on such high and mighty personages."

De Walden laughed loud, and going up to the prince and Buckingham, he slapped them heartily on the shoulder. Holloa, there! Masters, do ye hear? Well ye may bridle up and look so scornful. Here are two Germans have paid you the extraordinary compliment of mistaking you for the Prince of Wales, and his mighty favourite the Lord Buckingham. Why, sir," turning round to the astonished Germans, "think you the age of chivalry and romance is returned, when mighty princes and errant damsels went in disguise through unknown countries? Are ye so unlearned as not to know that

princes travel not through the states of civilized Europe, without pompous attendance and great honour? Go ye to the St. Germanicos, and make such a wild report as this, and I trow ye will soon find a cold lodging in the Bastille, and, may be, know the brand of the gaoler. Faith, I have half a mind myself to report to the prefect of this town, of the wild story you are like to spread through the country."

The countenances of the honest Germans fell at the ominous mention of the name of that dread prison; and when De Walden went towards the door, as if to carry his threat into execution, they simultaneously rushed up to him, and seizing him by the garments, in imploring accents begged him to desist from his purpose:—"We will promise never to speak of such nonsense again: indeed, it was very foolish in us to think the great Prince of Wales could be travelling in this poor way. We are but simple grooms, attached to the stud of the Prince Darmstad, bound to England to pur-

chase horses of high blood, as we have often done before ; and it would be an evil deed and little honour to do an injury to two ostelers."

" Well, Messrs. Ostelers, be ye not so forward in your observations and remarks for the future ; and because ye may happen to have seen a royal and a noble face at Newmarket, as often ye may, do not be likening every well-looking wayfarer to princes or nobles ; or, may be, ye will scarcely pass so free again : trouble not yourselves too busily in concerns beyond ye."

Without further delay, De Walden hastened the departure of the adventurers ; and in Paris procured more complete disguise, enveloping the graceful head of Buckingham, and concealing the raven ringlets of Prince Charles in full wigs, which completely shadowed their remarkable countenances. In full dependence on this mystification, they ventured to appear at a masque, wherein the beautiful Queen Anne of Austria, and the ladies of that splendid court,

appeared in all their magnificence and loveliness, and in which the Princess Henrietta, the unfortunate daughter of Henry the Fourth, first stood in the presence of her future, and yet more unfortunate husband. Who shall say that the young prince felt not at the moment the fascination of her charms?—certain it is, that Buckingham nursed that passion for the beautiful queen, which subsequently conduced to those acts of impetuosity and folly, which made him the scorn and the laughing-stock of Europe, and which, doubtless, had some influence over his extraordinary and unwarrantable conduct at the Spanish court. Be it as it may, the journey to Spain was prosecuted with sufficient expedition; and, saving the suspicions of the Count d'Epernon, governor of the frontier town of Bayonne, the noble party reached the Spanish capital without any significant obstruction. No suspicion was even excited in the jealous and vigilant court of Madrid of the arrival of such unusual guests; nor could the prudent and sa-

gacious Earl of Bristol believe the fact, when Buckingham rudely pressed through his crowd of menials, and announced to the astonished noble, that the sole heir of England's crown had voluntarily placed himself in the hands of a foreign power, and was at that moment awaiting in an obscure dark street for the ambassador.

Feeling at once the irreparable mischief which must accrue to an almost successful negotiation, and perhaps to himself, from so precipitate and fatal a step, which bore too much the stamp of the impetuosity of Buckingham, the Earl of Bristol hastened forth to welcome and to do honour to his future sovereign ; execrating the interference of a rival and overbearing compeer, whose temper and habits were sure of being offensive to the stately dignity of Castilian pride.

Charles and his few attendants were sumptuously lodged in the magnificent hotel of the English ambassador, the Earl of Bristol, who repaired at once to the palace of Oli-

varez, the powerful minister who swayed at that time, with undisputed ascendancy and manly vigour, the councils of the Spanish nation. The wary and haughty Spaniard could scarcely credit the improbable story of the prince and heir-apparent of a mighty kingdom adventuring himself, in disguise, and almost unattended, into the power of two states, each of which politically were bounden to exact promises from him that might be fatal to the interests of his own country ; but with the Castilian, chivalry and honour were talismanic words ; and this act of the English prince won more hearts for him in romantic Spain, than all the political advantages and costly presents he might have offered. However inclined the crafty Olivarez might have been to take advantage of the rash step which had precipitated Charles into his power, yet he dared not ; the haughty and bigoted minister felt he could not tamely insult the Castilian nobleness ; and that the first act of injustice towards the youthful stranger

prince would be visited on his head by the offended spirits of the magnates of chivalric Spain. Olivarez felt all this in wonderment, as he accompanied my lord of Bristol to his residence, where, in the saloon of the magnificent hotel, at midnight, the astonished minister of Philip the Third, the rival of Richelieu and the main-spring of the Catholic cause, who supported the armies of Tilly and Wallenstein from the mines of Mexico and Peru, paid his humble obeisance to a Protestant Prince, and welcomed him, in the name of his master, to Madrid.

We may leave to history's lying page, to the absurd deductions of party writers, the accounts of the negociations and quarrels that ensued therefrom, between the ill-assorted English and Spaniards—between the fierce impetuosity of Buckingham, and the overbearing pride of Olivarez. The train of the young prince, consisting of many gallant nobles, joined him soon after his arrival at Madrid, and among them

came Wilfred Conyers. He found his young master, the Barnadiston, high in the favour of Prince Charles, and even of the jealous Buckingham; and named as one of the knights to tilt for the fair fame of England, with five others, against all comers. "There will be the prince himself, a most accomplished knight, Wilfred," said the delighted Albert to his esquire, "and my lord of Buckingham, the unfailing lance of De Walden, and the stalwart arm of a Granville, and others of equal prowess; and among these shall be seen the heron crest of my ancestors, surmounted by the pale white rose, the gift of my lady-love. Though the age of shivering spears be gone by, and our challenge is not like to be answered by the proud Spaniard, yet will we vie with them even in their excelling art, the piercing of the frantic bull. Provided must I be with an Andalusian steed of the old Moorish blood, whose fetlocks have often been bathed in the blood of bulls, and whose dark eye rejoices in the présence of

danger. A few days hence doth the king and all the bright beauties of the court and city, plebeian as patrician, assemble in the spacious arena, about a mile beyond the walls, where all the pomp, state, and circumstance of the Spanish bull-fight is to be exhibited before our Prince; and wherein De Walden and myself have resolved to blood our spears and win ladies' favours. Heardst thou aught, Wilfred," was the first question of Albert to his esquire, "ere thy departure, of my noble mother and the beautiful Mary Milbank?"

"That they were well, my lord, as those letters shall show; but disconsolate at your journey to a foreign land."

"That, then, is a needless grief, Wilfred, unless, perchance, some accident befall me in the pastime in which I am about to engage. Dangerous is it; and the hardy bulls of the mountains, with their wrinkled foreheads and glaring eye-balls, are not to be angered lightly: but I trow well, thanks to your gallant father, Wilfred,

I can wield a lance and sit a horse as skilfully and gracefully as any Spanish Don among them ; and for Adrian de Walden, who ever knew him undertake aught in which he did not succeed ?”

“ Success, my lord, in feats of danger, can never be commanded ; it is not within the controul of skill, my lord, to avert the dangers incidental either to the chase of the boar, or the combat of the raging bull ; and although the excelling qualities of a fine horseman and a perfect spearsman may lessen the odds of accidents, yet it cannot preclude them,—either Adrian de Walden or Albert Barnadiston, perfect cavaliers as they be, may be discomfited and disgraced before the assembled concourse of Spanish beauty ; and the temper of my Lord de Walden would be soured to hatred, were you to succeed wherein he had failed : it were better to chafe the hardy bull than to excite the jealousy and rancour of my Lord de Walden.”

“ I fear it not, Wilfred Conyers : I am open alike in my friendships, as well as in mine en-

mities, if need be ; and if De Walden unjustly and causelessly take offence because I might perchance succeed in a joist or a bull-fight, where from some unforeseen hazard he had failed, he is little worthy of estimation : I will not hold so mean an opinion of any gentle of noble birth. Let me have the bounding, free Andalusian courser, with a broad front, and dark, beauteous eye, and nostrils blown abroad by the pride within."

Among the festivities of masks, of dances, and all the merry revelry of a court, put forth more particularly towards the entertainment of the Prince of Wales, whose chivalric expedition greatly delighted the taste of the Spanish nation, nothing equalled in magnificence, and in all the pride of nationality and grandeur, the bull-fight, which was prepared in a spacious arena, fitted up expressly for the purpose, in the shape of an amphitheatre, and surrounded with seats, adapted to hold a large concourse of people, plebeian as patrician. Many of the

grandees of Spain, and the young courtiers, eagerly came forward to display their skill and courage before the island strangers; and all the beauties of the court and city, the high-born damsels of the Laras, the dark-eyed daughters of the old Arab blood, mingled with the fair gothic hue, were there, to encourage, to applaud, or condemn; exciting the wonder of the passing stranger, that the sight of blood and atrocious cruelty can be all-hailed by the triumphant plaudits of beautiful women. The day was bright, and the throng of gay Spaniards mingled together, on foot, or on horseback, with the picturesque dresses and proud bearing of the hidalgos, and the close-fitting, manly, becoming vests worn by the lower orders of the people, who in those days, elate with the glory and renown of their country, trod with a free, bold step, the sure indication of a conquering race, added greatly to the magnificence of the scene, which was rendered more complete and imposing when the Spanish king, with Prince

Charles, passed through the throng of shouting populace, whose caps were flung aloft wildly in the air, which resounded with the deafening shouts of “Viva, viva, el re! Viva il Carlo Estuards!” The wide lists were opened, and the courtly throng, with thousands and thousands of the humbler classes, rushed in promiscuously. The trumpets resounded, and the voice of the heralds proclaimed the fair challenge of the English knights, to uphold the surpassing charms of the infanta against all comers. The compliment was felt; and as Buckingham, with the attendant knights, richly covered with costly armour, caracolled round the barriers. The loud shout arose of “Viva los Ingleses!” Drawing up full in front of the king, who was seated with the infanta, the English knights paid their devotions gracefully to their anticipated future queen, and reining back their foaming coursers, retired amidst the waving of kerchiefs and the mingled cheers of the mighty crowd. There was then a deep

pause; and the hum of the multitude was hushed, as the repose of the swelling ocean subsiding into a still calm on a summer's eve. Expectation held them mute, while the matadores, with nimble agility, trod over the vast area to remove every slight impediment which might obstruct their activity and endanger their lives; and when they had retired towards the barriers, four cavaliers, with spears well poised, and mounted on prancing steeds of the old Moorish blood, galloped round and around, balancing their lances, and waving their scarfs of red, green, black, and white, and as the favour of the spectators might incline, they hailed the gay colours, and with voice and gestures encouraged the cavaliers of their choice. The circle of Spanish beauty were more particularly forward in expressing their admiration, both by signs and sweet looks, which appeared however to be little regarded by the four knights, who reined up their pawing horses immediately under the seat where Leonora, the beautiful

daughter of the chief of the far-famed house of Lara, held in her delicate hand, as queen of the festive day, the laurelled coronet, to adorn the brow of the most approved and skilful cavalier in the affray. "He in red scarf," they said, as the buz of inquiry went round, "is of the family of Alonzo d'Ojeda, one of the gallant leaders, who followed the bright example of the heroic Fernando Cortez, and won for our nation the mines of the new world. Yon varied plume of green, red, deep purple, and yellow, is formed from the feathers of the gorgeous coloured birds who wing their flight over the endless pine-forests of the discovered lands, and was once the symbol of sovereignty, of the caciques of Chili. He with the black scarf, on the coal-black steed, with fiery eye and nostrils spread, the youth of the scornful lip, and dark raven hair, with the bear and ragged-staff silvered on his vest, is one of the English lords; and so is he, with the Saxon blue eye, and fearless open countenance, who

bears the white rose in his cap, and on the bridle of his milk-white courser of Andalusian blood, sprung from the conquering fathers of the desert ; while the green-clad cavalier is one of our old gothic pride, of the untainted line of the Gusman."

Loud arose the shout of exultation, when, lashing his tail, and flinging his dark knotted wringled head on high, the lord of lowing herds rushed bellowing into the centre of the spacious area. He stood pawing up with fierce rage the pulverized sand, and his dark eye shot forth a fiery and ominous glare. Away, away ! his lowering front stoopeth between his giant knees, his tail is lashed aloft, and his fiery eye is fixed ; wondrously he rejoiceth in his strength. The lances are stooped, and the steeds bound, antelope-like, through the wide arena. On comes the mighty bull, full on the scarlet-scarfed cavalier ; he of the varied gorgeous plume, the descendant of the spoiler of Chili. Round and round the ring he wheels in gallop

swift, while his comrades pursue the raging bull: the spear of the black-scarfed knight hath razed his skin, and in all the foam and freshness of unabated strength and fearful rage, he turns on the coal black horse, and his too daring rider. "He is gored!" shouted the thousand voices of the multitude; "gored to the death, and trampled under foot, beneath the powerful, resistless stamping of the monarch of the meads; deeply are the thirsty lances brasted in his broad back." Yet does the chafing bull spurn under his horned hoofs the sinking form of the coal-black steed; but the knight of the black scarf is caught up aloft in the arms of the shouting people. Reeking with blood, and the white foam of wrath spread like snow-wreaths adown his dark brawny neck and shoulders; roaring with pain, frantic, with his tail dyed in his own blood, streaming like a banner, again the savage bull charges around the arena; down falls the horse of the cacique-plumed cavalier, and gored through, mortally wounded, the steed of the knight of Gusman yet bears

his lord unharmed through the sheltering barrier, and then staggers, reels, and slowly falls in the agonies of death.

“Thrust the spear home, full beneath the great shoulder blade,” shouted the tumultuous voices of the eager spectators, as the cavalier of the snow white scarf, with the pale white rose, and on the Andalusian courser, spurred his steed to full career. “Fairly struck!” again shouted the exulting voices of the multitude, and the clapping of hands was loud, and the gay kerchiefs waved, as the horse reared up on high, and then plunging forward, sped the forceful spear right through the roaring bull. Deeply is the mortal lance transfixed, and the matadores play fearlessly around the sinking hero of the fight, and shake the scarlet mantle before him. Away, away! impetuous, conquering death in its last agony—he burst forth, the cloth swims before his glazing eye, majestically he sinks, gradually and without a groan, amidst the deafening roar of the human voice—and but one plunge, and the dark

monarch of the lowing herds fell dead upon the ensanguined sand. It was then that the white-scarfed cavalier was hailed by the renewed plaudits of the spectators ; and one of the matadores, holding the bridle of his milk-white courser, led him beneath the seat, where the queen of beauty of the festive day, the raven-haired and dark-eyed daughter of the chief of Lara, held aloft the laurelled coronet, to adorn the fair brow of the Saxon stranger. Doffing his cap, the youth bowed down to the curving arched neck of his snorting steed, and as the lovely Spanish maiden bound the wreath of triumph over the flowing chesnut locks of the cavalier of the white rose, she said aloud, "Wear the garland for the day, in meed of your superior skill in the manège of the horse, and the dexterous use of the lance ; and this chain, stranger, for my sake."

Gaily the gallant kissed the fair hand of the donor, and caracolling round the arena,

the shout arose among the few English, and was reiterated by the transported Spaniards of “A Barnadiston ! viva el Signor Inglese !”

Gallop ing through the barriers, Albert Barnadiston was glad to escape from the scene of his triumph, and with Wilfred, he rode swiftly back to Madrid ; proud, doubtless, of his first essay in arms, but yet prouder of the distinctive notice of the high-born daughter of Lara. On the night of this festive day, a grand ball was given at the palace, where all of lofty birth and lineage of Castile, and of the English strangers, were welcome guests. Among the throng of richly-clad courtiers in the picturesque dresses of the times, immortalized by the genius of Vandyke, none equalled in magnificence, even among the proud Spanish grandees, the ostentatious and extravagant Buckingham. He was arrayed in a rich scarlet vesture, thickly studded with costly jewels, the handle of his dress sword of the purest agate, sparkled with

emeralds ; while his velvet cap, with its ostrich plume, was ornamented by strings of valuable pearls. There was a splendour and national dignity, an imposing comeliness, with an outward manly seeming, about the favourite of Prince Charles, which at first sight precluded the idea of effeminacy and intolerable vanity, which such a dress might have suggested ; yet, the unbecoming eagerness and hasty impetuosity, the overbearing and dictatorial manner of Buckingham, soon dispelled the favourable impression which his commanding person and gallant mien might have inspired. And among a grave, serious, and haughty—aye, and a cold, proud people like the Spaniards, the carriage and address of the favourite excited the strongest feelings of dislike, while his natural familiarity and vein of jocose pleasantry, in which he was wont to indulge, was held as a singular mark of low breeding and vulgar origin. He was unfavourably contrasted with Prince Charles, whose silence and

reserve was esteemed a sure mark of a modest and sensible mind, while his dignified air, and melancholy countenance, rarely lit up by an irradiating smile, was greatly in unison with the Castilian feeling. The Spaniard usually is a very great man, or probably much oftener but a pompous fool, who has, however, the pride of concealing his imbecility beneath the veil of unapproachable distance; but when really a powerful-minded character, he rises superior to the generality of the human race. Few countries have produced a Trajan, a Seneca, a Cervantes, a Cortez, and a Ximenes.

The crowd of beauty pressed on through the vast apartment, and sweetest melody sounded through the gilded domes and long galleries; the bursting laugh of youthful pleasure echoed loud and long, and the cheerful castanet rung forth its glad notes from among the groups of dancers, who, in heart-felt merriment, went through the voluptuous movements of the national bolero.

Albert Barnadiston gazed on this scene of fes-

tive magnificence, and in that hour he perhaps thought not of his own loved home of Kedington, nor of the beautiful Mary, the star of his existence. He had fallen under the fascination of the enchantress, the dark-eyed descendant of the Moorish Almansours or Boabdils, mixed with the gothic fairness of the house of Lara—of Leonora, the queen of the festal day, whose lovely form floated like a vision of beauty through the brain of the enamoured youth. There was another, too, whose eye of fire was fixed intently on the lovely Spanish girl; and the dark scowl of demoniac expression fitfully gleamed across the fine featured mien of the handsome youth, who, with arms folded, stood beneath the central light of the vast hall, gazing intently on the fluttering fair. That countenance could not be mistaken,—it was Adrian de Walden, the victim of his own wild passions, yet dominant over the minds of others. His left arm was in a sling, and his face showed more than usually pale,

from the accident of the morning. He was occasionally talking in low whispers to his page Palikar, whose quick lightning glance wandering rapidly from the beautiful Leonora to the frank and manly countenance of the Barnadiston, betrayed at once the objects of discourse; and once, when the queen of beauty held forth a white rose in the mazy dance to Albert, a dark cloud passed over the expressive brow of De Walden, and the small hand of the Asiatic page grasped rapidly the jewelled dagger in his eastern girdle. Enveloping himself in his wrapping cloak, De Walden, followed closely by the page, passed on through the crowd, and whispering to Albert Barnadiston, he pointed to the lovely Leonora, saying, in a fierce tone, "Think not to triumph there, vain boy;" while Palikar more openly drew his dagger, and significantly nodding, pointed to the glittering weapon, which seemed ready to start from the sheath. Aware of the audacious and fearless temper of the young Anatolian, Albert Barnadiston started

back several paces, but recovering himself, he caught the sardonic smile of the dangerous De Walden, as his shadow showed within the porch, fixed intently on him, as though in mockery of his weakness. There was a momentary flush of rage crimsoned across the face of Albert, and his hand grasped the hilt of his sword, but the consciousness of courage manned the bold look of the Barnadiston, as he returned the haughtystare, which would have borne him down.

The night of revelry was done, and the calm silvery light of the pale moon glimmered over the orange groves and stately palaces of the proud city of the Spaniards. Replete, like the fantastic creation of some fairy's wand, with ornamental gardens, fragrant with the delicious odour of roses, and abounding with the hyacinth and jasmine, Madrid in those days might be considered the favoured abode of the Paphian goddess, and the land of romance crowned with glory, by the illustrious deeds of her adventurous children, enjoyed as the reward of suc-

cessful valour the golden tributes of her colonies, which opened a broad path for the excess of love, of pleasure, and of licentiousness. The palaces of the nobles, after the manner of the old Roman, were erected with the most solid stone, and surrounded with pleasure-grounds of vast extent, which gave a rich rural landscape within the walls of the city, unequalled by any other capital; and the dark olive shadowing some crumbling kiosk, and the beams of the moon playing upon some marble minaret, surmounted with the sign of the cross, or the silvery form of the Saviour, brought back the memory of the fallen greatness of a mighty people, proclaiming, too, by the evidence of the graceful Moorish architecture, the triumph of the cross over the waning crescent. The tinkling of the guitar, and the deep music of the human voice, sounded sweetly through the solitudes of the streets, and the ear of night was gladdened with softest music, till the day-beam shone on high. The hanging plumes and wrap-

ping cloak of the serenaders suited well with the poetry of such a scene, completed by the glancing of the white arm, and dark eye flashing through the envious lattices, or the form of bewitching beauty listening to the tale of love, while Philomel warbled her plaintive notes to the soft balmy air.

It was on such a night that Albert Barnadiston, throwing around him a Spanish cloak, accompanied by Wilfred Conyers, and a band of serenaders, hurried down the broad Prado, and stopped before a splendid mansion. The music of the serenade, the mingled harmony of the soft-stringed, wild guitar, with the unison of the deep mellowing voice, rose softly on the ambient serenity of a Spanish night. The high lattice was thrown abroad, and the beautiful form of woman, "half woman and half child," with flowing luxuriant ringlets, stood forward in listening attitude. It was the graceful and beautiful Leonora, awakened by the lute of love, of the Saxon stranger. The

melodious sounds died away, and the voice of Albert, the earnest whisper of passionate fondness, echoed on the still solitude of the starry night. A light cloud was passing over the moon, shadowing for a moment the silvery brilliancy which play upon the tall fanes of the Christians and the neglected shrines of the forgotten children of the desert. The broad way of the Prado, with its lofty and sheltering avenue of trees, was enveloped in sudden darkness, and a low wind, the prelude of a fitful storm, murmured its dirge through the waving branches. A deep groan was heard, followed by a shrill scream and a clash of steel, with the mingled tumult of a rapid and fierce conflict. The unclouded moon again shone forth, casting her mellowing light upon the death-like features of Albert Barnadiston, supported on the left arm of Wilfred Conyers, while the page Palikar lay prostrate beneath his feet, his right hand almost severed by the vengeful sword of Conyers, but yet instinctively clenching the

jewelled dagger, and gazing with a stedfast eye on the reeking blade, which was held to his throat,—“Go, poor boy,” said Conyers; “go,” and spurning the page from him, “’tis the country of thy birth, the degenerate spirit of the modern Greek, that hath taught thee to use the assassin’s knife; and the lessons of thy master, born in a land of freedom, but more fitted for the climes which nurture the dark deeds of revenge. Away, boy, and tell Lord Adrian de Walden that he shall yet rue the work of this night.”

CHAPTER VII.

Short was the conflict ; furious, blindly rash,
Vain Otho gave his bosom to the gash ;
He bled, and fell, but not with deadly wound,
Stretch'd by a dexterous sleight along the ground.
Demand thy life ——

BYRON.

OBTAINING assistance from the night-watch, for the serenaders had fled, as was their wont, from the commencement of the affray, Conyers had his youthful lord transported into the hotel of the English ambassador, which was near at hand ; and having made the Earl of Bristol acquainted with the quality and condition of the sufferer, that humane nobleman

instantly ordered the attendance of his personal surgeon, and assisted in stopping the fast-flowing life-blood which threatened immediate dissolution. The wound of the Barnadiston was deep in the back, beneath the right shoulder, but the skill of the leech succeeded in stopping the profuse bleeding, and, save a protracted confinement from weakness, no other inconvenience was to be apprehended, nor was there the least symptom of danger.

Conyers watched by the couch of his young lord and early friend with all the affection of a brother, and listened with anxiety to the feverish and flighty ideas which arose from the distracted brain of Albert. "Shake forth the heron plume of my ancestors; down with the lance—away, away in rapid circle. How beautifully boundeth the Andalusian steed;—hark to the mad roaring of the bull: he comes, he comes, the spear enters his dark side! Shout, shout, 'tis the name of the Barnadiston." And a gleam of triumph would pass over the pale,

smiling lip of the dreaming cavalier. Anon he would change the theme and utter fondly the name of Leonora ; and then clenching his hand in fierce rage, call for his sword, and defy De Walden to the combat,—or suddenly covering his eyes with one hand, throw forth the other as if he would keep off some hideous spectre. “ ’Tis he, ’tis he !—I know him by his demoniac countenance. Avaunt, treacherous coward !—hah, I feel it in me ; ’tis the boy assassin’s steel,—he with the fascinating quick glance—the page, the page Palikar.” Or murmuring softly on the pillow, he would call on the name of his mother, pray in holy earnestness with Gaspardo, while, at times, large tear-drops would bedew his cheek as he held discourse with his beloved Mary.

It was on the third day of his confinement that Albert Barnadiston awoke to consciousness. He held forth his hand with a languid smile to Wilfred ; “ All is as it should be, my friend ; I have suffered, and suffered justly.”

“ Albert,” said Wilfred, pressing warmly the hand of his young lord, “ we will find other time to talk over the events that have induced this catastrophe. In the mean time, let us rejoice in your recovery, which will be hailed with pleasure by the Prince and all our English nobles, save one, or perhaps two.”

“ Whom mean you, Wilfred Conyers? I have an indefinite recollection of a threat from De Walden, but surely he could not ——”

A sad smile played on the countenance of Wilfred. “ It was he, nevertheless, my lord, who armed the hand of the devoted page against your life. But for the present you must rest content; I shall go forth, and may be shall find an opportunity of speaking more certainly upon this matter.”

It was afternoon, the Spaniards had roused up from their siestas, and the crowd of beauty and of fashion poured along the broad avenue of the Prado, when Wilfred Conyers joined among the busy multitude, who pressed forward

in heedless folly. There were the grandees of the land, with the prouder priest, whose insolent look and pompous mien bespoke the palmy state of the church in the country of bigotry and superstition; there might be seen the swarthy featured and imperious viceroy of the New World, returned after years of tyranny and bloodshed, with the gay Hidalgos and the grave Dons, who prided themselves on a lineage of a thousand years. There, too, might be seen groups of peasantry in their gaily picturesque costumes, dancing beneath the wide-spreading beech-trees to the light music of the tinkling guitar,—while the merry glance of the dark-eyed daughters of the land shot forth sweet beams through the envious shadowing of the graceful veil, whose hanging drapery heightens the swelling charms of the light-limbed Andalusian girls. There, too, amidst the lively crowd, might be seen the splendour of the English cavalcade mingling with the passing train of Buckingham.

Wilfred Conyers wrapped his mantle close around, and shading his face, he sought out Adrian de Walden, whom he found in close converse with the favourite. He watched his opportunity, and making a sign to De Walden, he rapidly disengaged himself from the crowd and entered the retired grounds of a garden. He was followed by the young lord, who imagined it might be some secret spy that had intelligence of import to reveal of a state secret, or perhaps the equally attractive message of some lady love. And although he might have felt startled at the silent solitude and dark retreat to which his guide directed his footsteps, yet as fear was a quality wholly unknown to the daring De Walden, he never hesitated or faltered in his step. At length, within the deep recess of a thick grove, where the ground had been cleared away for some Midsummer feast under the greenwood, Conyers suddenly threw down his cloak, and drawing his sword, held up in his left hand a signet-ring, bearing the

device of the bear and ragged staff. The action was so sudden, and the surprise of De Walden so great at the unexpected appearance of Conyers, that he staggered back several paces before he recovered his self-composure; but, manning himself with his usual courage, he advanced towards Wilfred, demanding in a haughty tone, "What means this mummerly, Master Conyers?"

"It is more honourable mummerly, my lord," said Wilfred, "than you are wont to use to gratify your revenge; the midnight dagger is more to your taste than the defying sword. Know you not this signet of your page Palikar, who would have died by my hand, but that I knew him to be but the weapon of the true assassin, Lord Adrian de Walden. Defend yourself, my lord, in fair combat—a better fate than you deserve from the sword of the foster-brother and esquire of the gallant Barnadiston."

"We fight not, sir esquire," said De Walden, proudly, "with persons of low degree; it is the

belted spur and knightly glance which can alone demand our sword : we leave the punishment of churls to baser churls. Stand aside, Master Conyers, and let me have no more of this foolery.”

“ You are pleased, my lord, to insult my birth ; but you must learn that the sense of justice can nerve the peasant’s arm to reverse the absurd decrees of heraldic honour, and to vindicate the rights of mankind in despite of all vain distinctions. Lord de Walden is not a coward ; but he passeth not forth from hence without the brand thereof, and the infamy of a disgraceful insult, if he shall persist in a refusal to fight the avenger of blood, to expiate for the attempted murder of the Lord Barnadiston. I am cool, my lord—firm, and most determined. I have every indubitable proof ; therefore either fight, or you shall be proclaimed a murderer, a midnight assassin, through the lands of merry England, and a craven coward withal.”

The angry spot lowered over the dark,

swarthy face of De Walden at the name of coward, and with a sudden energy, drawing his sword, he aimed a deadly blow, with a furious gesture, full at the unguarded breast of Wilfred, who was alone saved by his youthful agility ; but the onset of the irritated young lord was so rapid and resolute, that it required all the skill and coolness of Conyers to parry it. Both the combatants were equally expert in the use of their weapons ; but De Walden, by his quick and unexpected attack, had obtained the advantage of ground, by compelling Conyers to retreat too close to the branches of trees behind him, which greatly impeded the free use of his limbs. Wilfred was, by consequence, confined to act on the defensive, in a cramped position, against the fierce and scientific attack of his powerful adversary. The eyes of De Walden flashed fire at the apparent disadvantage under which he could perceive his foe to labour, and a gleam of hellish triumph played across his beautiful brow, as he saw Conyers more than

commonly inconvenienced by the impending boughs, which interfered with his exertions; and fancying him at one moment inextricably entangled by a waving branch, he lounged with a fell cry at the heart of Conyers, who suddenly sunk to the ground, while the blade of De Walden passed above him through the impassive air; and then springing like a mountain cat, Conyers impelled his sword like lightning through the arm of the infuriate noble: down dropped the useless limb, while the sword, strongly grasped in the nervous hand, fell with its point at the feet of Conyers, as though in the act of salute."

"Well, my lord," said Wilfred, in that calm manner so peculiar to him, "fallen art thou into my power, and your fearful life is in my hand: what should prevent me from ridding the world of a dangerous noble, who scruples not to arm the assassin against his friend, the Barnadiston."

"Away with such folly, Wilfred Conyers,"

said De Walden, suddenly resuming that commanding mien and impressive action that was his wont. The fierce rage of fiery passion seemed to have passed away, but the deep tone and stern, unforgiving spirit of the man broke forth in his short answer:—"Your young lord, the Barnadiston, crossed my path of love. I would have swept him away, even as I would him who should be a thorn in my career of ambition. The Barnadiston is hateful to my sight, as is the basilisk, and I will hold no terms with the vain boy; but it will be better for Wilfred Conyers to be satisfied with the triumph he has obtained over a De Walden. My life may be of more service to you hereafter than the gratification of your momentary revenge."

The sculptured, statue-like countenance of Wilfred was lighted up with a more than ordinary glow of indignation, as he sheathed his sword; and looking stedfastly at De Walden—"No, my lord," he said, "I have never cherished nor gloated over a deed of revenge; nor

could I lift my hand against a nerveless foe. Had you fallen in the heat of the combat I should have little cared ; but I murder not in cold blood. I shall require but one condition—never more conspire against the Barnadiston.”

“ I have declared myself the open and avowed foe of the Barnadiston. I shall pursue him with an unrelenting hatred ; but I will also pledge him from the revengeful dagger of Pali-kar, who acted from his own impulses, and not by my order. Moreover, Conyers, I may on some future day remember your conduct.”

Withdrawing hastily from the gardens, Conyers dispatched some of the attendants of Lord de Walden to his assistance, while he repaired again to the sick room of Albert, where he found the Earl of Bristol in deep converse with the Barnadiston. Bowing respectfully, he was about to retire, when that nobleman signified his desire that he should remain. “ I have been urging,” he said, “ my young friend here to return, with all convenient expedition,

to England. I have learned from my spies that he has incurred the deadly animosity of the favourite of the Favourite; and since but little credit can accrue from the Spanish affair, the sooner he be disengaged from the intrigues of the party the better. I must bear the whole brunt of their malice; but my duty to my sovereign and my country demands I should do so."

"At enmity with my lord of Buckingham, through the animosity of his favourite! it were well, my lord, to my thinking," said Wilfred, "if Lord Albert were to free himself from the trammels of that aspiring noble, and his unprincipled creatures; yet would it not be right nor consonant with the high loyalty of the Barnadiston to fall into the disfavour of his prince, which a too sudden departure might countenance. I would give up the best hope of my youth, could we accomplish our purpose with sufficient honour."

"It is well spoken," said the Digby, "and

such as accords with the talent and high character I have heard of the esquire and companion of Lord Albert; and yet it may be done, my young friend, without the heavy sacrifice you would submit to. It is required that some person of rank should bear the dispatches of our tedious negotiation, and the cause of the protracted stay of the prince to our alarmed sovereign and the terrified people of England. The health of the Barnadiston may be appropriately urged for the necessity of his return to his native land; and I will so order it to the Prince, that he shall be especially selected for this mission."

"Yet would I desire," said Albert, raising himself on the pillow, "to be fairly acquitted with Adrian de Walden before I go: he has causelessly become my foe, and aimed at my life; it is fitting he should expiate such treachery, and by this arm," striking it forth with a vehement gesture, "shall he meet his reward."

"He has already done so," remarked Wilfred, "and I have crossed swords but now with the

Lord de Walden, and fortune favoured my encounter."

"What!" shouted Albert and the Earl of Bristol; "have you killed De Walden?"

"Not so; he is but disabled in the sword arm; and although he has declared his hostility openly against my Lord Albert, yet he has disavowed the act of his page, who was impelled by his own feelings."

"Welcome is the enmity of De Walden, for I fear no open foe; and truly do I believe the act of that young tiger-cub, Palikar, to have been his own devilish invention. But tell me the manner of your fight, Wilfred—how did De Walden bear himself? Skilful is he in the use of his weapon—and it must have been some chance that gave you the advantage. O that I could have measured blades with De Walden! Often have we done so in mimic sport, and neither have had much to boast. When we do meet, our strife will be mortal."

Conyers then related the fight, and its various turns, as already detailed; and artfully and

gradually changing the subject, he gave a glowing description of Kedington, and the reminiscences of youthful scenes, to the Earl of Bristol — of the noble Lady Barnadiston, of Gaspardo, of the hawks, and the two gallant hounds *couchant* the live-long summer-day upon the marble pavement of the old hall. The tear glistened in the eye of Albert, as the fond recollections of his home arose upon his memory ; and the lovely image of Mary Milbank, with her sorrowing, upbraiding countenance, smote his conscience. He wrung the hand of Lord Bristol, overpowered by his feelings ; and begging that nobleman to further his return to England as expeditiously as circumstances might allow, he expressed a wish to be left alone to his own meditations.

CHAPTER VIII.

Thy shores are empires, chang'd in all save thee—
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters wasted them while they were free,
And many a tyrant since ; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage ; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts ; not so thou,
Unchangeable, save to thy wild wave's play.
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow,
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

HAVING intimated to the Prince of Wales the expediency of selecting a person of rank to bear to England the dispatches touching the flagging negociation carrying forward for the long meditated marriage of the heir of England with the Infanta, the Earl of Bristol further hinted that the delicate state of health of the Lord Barnadiston required a change of air and scene, and

that a more fit person could not be chosen to be entrusted with a confidential communication. The Prince readily assented to the arrangement of the noble ambassador ; regretting, however, to lose the young Barnadiston, whose free carriage and noble bearing had won greatly on the heart of Charles.

In a few days, Albert found himself sufficiently recovered from his wound to proceed on his journey ; but prior to his departure, he waited at the levee of his Prince, where he was warmly greeted by the royal followers, who admired the frank and manly character of Lord Albert. There was a pallidness on his countenance, proceeding from his confinement, which threw an unusual air of languor over his frame, and the stoop which he favoured to ease the healing action of the wound, very greatly disguised his carriage ; so much so, that any person who might have followed him, could never have augured that it was the Barnadiston who preceded him. It so happened, that my

lord of Buckingham, accompanied by Adrian de Walden, whose right arm was supported in a black scarf, were passing into presence, and actually brushed by Albert without recognition; but the Barnadiston, touching De Walden on the shoulder, that ardent noble suddenly and fiercely turned round, but at once stepped back, eyeing Albert from head to foot with ineffable scorn, and approaching close to him, he whispered, "Recollect we are foes, deadly : it boots not why I hate you ; but like the spirit of Cæsar to Antony, I have been rebuked under your ascendancy ; once have you triumphed, vain boy—but when we meet again, it shall be in a conflict wherein the stake shall be life."

"I accept your challenge," said Albert, touching the basket-handle of his sword, and returning the haughty look of De Walden ; "and although I cherish not the mortal animosity which actuates you, yet do I pant for the hour when we may stand at each other's points. Your vindictiveness is not unknown to

me, proud lord ; but yet do I neither fear your enmity, nor value your friendship."

De Walden waved his hand courteously, although the dark frown of defiance gathered on his lowering brow, and turning among the courtier throng, he entered the presence almost with Albert, who was graciously received by the Prince, greatly to the mortification of Buckingham, who had espoused the quarrel of De Walden. Entrusted with the commands of the Prince, and paying his farewell respects, Albert hastened to the hotel of the English ambassador, where the preparations for his journey, under the superintendence of Conyers, were complete ; and after a long converse with the Earl of Bristol on his future views, the Barnadiston took a kindly farewell of that distinguished nobleman, and set forth that very night, accompanied only by Wilfred, for England.

The calmness of the sea, when the Barnadiston embarked from Corunna, promised a fair and prosperous passage ; and the sombre head-

lands of the Spanish coast showed grandly sublime, touched by the glories of the setting sun, slowly declining behind the mountains, covered with the fruitful olive, gemmed by the creeping vine, and crowned with toppling convents, whose white wall speered above the rugged rocks, through the wide interstices of hoary cork trees; while the deep swung bells of an hundred monasteries pealed the solemn swell of vesper above the moaning of the mighty Atlantic; and as the heavy toll echoed fainter and more faint across the calm wave, the mariners trimmed their light-bounding bark, singing responsively in beautiful melody the Ave Maria. 'Tis the hour of prayer. The foam of the dashing waters seemed to pay homage to the dancing prow, while phosphoric streams of meteor light fitfully played on the bosom of old ocean, as the queen of night asserted her brilliant rule over the fluctuating tides. Obedient to her sway, the light-heated breeze of the autumnal season freshened gradually at

the close of day ; and as the night advanced, a favourable and gentle gale wafted the vessel, falcon-like and fast, into the mighty vortex of the waste of waters : light clouds passed rapidly athwart the waning moon, and as the dark gloom of funereal sable night assumed the ascendancy, the ominous floating of fast flying scud across the canopy of heaven, with the increasing hollow sounds of the whistling wind, singing the dirge of the tempest through the rattlings and perforated blocks, gave the prelude of the destroying storm ; the billows crested in angry foam against the heaving ship, and the roar of ocean rising in its rage, like a mighty giant refreshed from his slumber, called forth all the courage and skill of the mariners : the top-yards were lowered, and all the sails close-reefed, and the vessel lay tossed like a plaything upon the bosom of circumambient foam. Albert and Wilfred gazed with mingled feelings of pleasure and of awe upon the yeasty magnificence of the vast Atlantic, whose deep roaring sounds

spoke with a voice louder than the pealing thunder of heaven's artillery, or the shock of armies on the echoing plain. A long loud shriek arose—the crash of falling timber grated on the startled ear, and in a moment tossed away upon “the rude cradle” of the surging wave, a mast dashed past the side of the vessel, and the bubbling convulsed groans of drowning men wailed horribly above the wild strife of the elements, and were borne away in one supernatural scream by the rushing wind to expiate the spirit of the storm. All was confusion and wild uproar in the frail bark ; some with trembling knees faltered an agonizing Ave Maria, and others, wild from fear, unnerved by the spectre of death, would have seized upon the maddening draught to drown in insensibility the apprehension of a watery grave ; but fixing himself with stern resolution before the hatchway, armed with a brace of pistols, and aided by Conyers and the master of the ship, Albert drove back the terrified seamen to their duty. Nought

remained but to scud before the increasing fury of the gale, and after squaring the yards, and putting the helm a-midship, the little bark darted off, bounding above the mountain waves like the screaming seamew tipping the waters with rapid wing; the howling of the storm moaned above the broad dashing of the pursuing billows, which every moment threatened to engulph the shattered bark beneath the wide valley of waters; but as the day dawned, when the hours threw abroad the portals of heaven for the fiery steeds who drew the golden chariot of the sun, the gleam of his glory burst forth upon the effulgent ocean, and the winds, softened by his rays, were gradually "pillowed on the waves."

Albert beheld the calming of the mighty ocean, whose unseen and resistless power hath scattered the pride of navies, and on whose fickle bosom the urchin boy hath safely floated, laughing away the saucy brine from his ruddy lip, fathomless and vast, where Leviathan gamboleth, and where the light nau-

tilus spreadeth its fairy sails—whereon the early Phœnician first launched the adventurous bark, and in proud triumph asserted the vain dominion of man over the wondrous element, 'till the silent oblivion of the watery tomb, which will bear no epitaph of glory, of folly, or of falsehood, taught the pride and superstition of nations to bow down in adoration, and to admire with awe the glories and the terrors of the boundless waters, the sublime image of eternity. A dull, dead calm followed the subsiding of the tempest, until again the night breeze, wafting the aromatic odours from the shores of the old Spaniard, bore the vessel, tottering under a heavy press of sail, to the island of the sage and free.

In a few days, the chalky cliffs of Albion greeted the longing eyes of the impatient Albert, and flinging himself into the first boat, he sprang ashore with Wilfred, and hastened with all expedition to London. He was at once admitted to an interview with King James, and having delivered his dispatches and secret message from

the Prince, the doting monarch questioned him oft and long of the state of the marriage negotiation, of the reception of the babie Charles, and the conduct of Steenie (the familiar name of Buckingham, both with King James and the unfortunate Charles.)

“Did ye hear, Master of Barnadiston, or, may be see, for ye are an observant youth, I ken—did ye hear much talk or likelihood of the speedy espousals of the Prince with the Infanta? I am told by my letters that this dispensation is withheld by the Pope on account of some further favouring of the Catholics of this kingdom at my hands; but I can scarce yield more, since I have already expressed my determination to accompany the Romanists—*usque ad aras*.”

“Beyond the observance of honours, and all sorts of respect shown to the Prince, so please your gracious Majesty, I had little opportunity to note; but it was rumoured the negotiation flagged as much from the ill-favour between the Spanish minister, the Duke of Olivarez, and

the fierce impetuosity of my lord of Buckingham, as from the impediments arising from the papal sec. My lord of Bristol too, who is well versed in the Spanish temper, is obstructed by the unwise interference of Buckingham."

"Aweel, mon," said the sovereign, casting a suspicious glance around the apartment, and eyeing Albert with a scrutinizing glance, "I hae my ain thoughts o' the policy o' babie Charles and Steenie interfering by their personal presence in this delicate affair, and much was against my own inclining; but they are forward boys, and would have it in their own management, against my wholesome advice and cunning craft, the which was to put all trust in my faithful and wise servant, the Earl of Bristol, who is well acquainted with the Spaniards' ways and manner. Woe the day that I foolishly granted the permission to my babie and that hot-brained Steenie to gang out of the kingdom; sore hae I been at heart ever syne, and their gait weel bring my old grey hairs

with dishonour to the grave:" and the poor feeble king burst forth into a childish lamentation; "but hie ye your own ways, Master of Barnadiston, it were not safe for ye to speak so boldly of my lord of Buckingham. Steenie's malice is to be feared, and it would be more than my power that could save ye from his wrath; ye are a well-favoured youth, and I wo'd not ye came to harm, unto the which your free speech would surely bring ye, for the court swarms with Steenie's swash bucklers."

"I regard not, my liege," said Albert warmly, "neither the swash bucklers of the Duke of Buckingham, or that peer himself; I am armed with the firm shield of loyalty, and the laws of my free country will guard me from the malice of the most powerful; I wear a sword, too, that can protect me from an insult."

"Ye talk big and bold, mon, and may be weel too, but ye wad fare better away from Steenie; and though I in no wise doubt your courage, for ye are a Barnadiston, ever a loyal and noble

name, yet it would be dangerous for ye to be measuring swords, and clanging o' sharp steel within the precincts of the court, which would surely be, were you and Steenie to meet in angry mood. The raging lion and chafed boar assort not peaceably. Away, mon, to your castle of Barnadiston, and be ye sure we will ever recollect you among the best servants of our crown, and so commend thee to our babie, who has formed a high opinion of ye."

When Albert left the presence of his sovereign, he went straight to the apartments of his kinsman, Sir Philip Maulerever, who received him with the warmth and frankness of his nature, towards those unto whom he took a liking; and among the few who found particular favour in the sight of the old warrior, none were so much beloved as the Barnadiston. The affection which he had cherished from his youth upward to his beautiful cousin, the mother of Albert, together with the manly and bold bearing of his young kinsman, had endeared him to his heart; and,

highly loyal himself, devoted unscrupulously to his prince, acknowledging no law but his command, and firm to the falling faith of the ancient worship, which above every other enslaveth the mind to the domination and divine supremacy of kings and priests, and exacteth an idolatry lowlier even than the slavish adulation of the Asiatic; he was fond to believe that in Albert Barnadiston he beheld the heir of his own qualities and his own prejudices, and in whom he could not but perceive the same disinterested devotion—the enthusiasm, the courage, and the chivalrous spirit which had eminently marked his own career, and which would point him out in a moment of danger, to bear the standard of royalty through a phalanx of rebel foes. He asked Albert a thousand questions of the Spanish journey, of the Prince, of the Spaniard, of the Infanta, and of Buckingham; and as Albert related the various adventures of the bull-fight, of Leonora, of the queen of beauty, of the festive-day, of the serenade, and

of the assassin's attack, the countenance of Sir Philip Maulerever betrayed the alternate emotions of pleasure and of anger, but he absolutely shook with interest and shouted with joy as Albert recounted the events of the combat between De Walden and Conyers. "Hah!" he said, "that squire of yours must be a noble, a most gallant youth—but, rot him, I should have thought much better of him, if he had driven his steel through the heart's blood of that villain, De Walden; the mercy that spares a treacherous foe, too often endues him with the power to wreak future revenge. But what of your especial conference with the sovereign, Albert?"

"But little, Sir Bevil, save that I am recommended to repair to my castle, lest I stumble on the path of that bugbear, the Favourite."

"Well, I am not sure but that is the most prudent course; I would see you, Albert, rather the father of your devoted and powerful tenantry in peace, and their gallant leader in war, as

the famed Barnadiston of this country have ever been—a fearless baron of England, than to be wrangling with the mushroom insects who swarm in the palaces of princes. I neither court them nor fear them, for my attachment is purely personal to the sovereign, and they know well I seek neither place nor power; and that they would have little credit in conspiring against a rough and ready soldier. But ye are young, and have higher duties to perform, than to dangle through antechambers, the perfumed and prim courtier of the day. Go ye down, where ye have ‘a local habitation and a name,’ and let the peasantry, the rural cultivators of the land, whose hearts are firm in the hour of danger, and whose hands are strong in the day of battle, feel that attachment towards you, which can only be assured by kind acts, by the hospitality of the hall cheer, and the remembrance of unostentatious charity. Practise the virtues of a just and bold protector of your people, who look up to you for example and encouragement; and when the

trump of war shall summon your followers to arms, you shall be surrounded with a band of hardy warriors, firmly attached to your person, and devoted to any cause you shall advocate."

"So shall I do, my gallant kinsman," said Albert, "after the manner of my ancestors; and when the proud standard of England flouts the pale skies of a foreign land, or waves above the feudal chivalry, who may be summoned to gather round the person of the King, the old heron crest of the Barnadiston shall be upheld by a thousand stout and fearless men of our eastern borders, who shall form the vanguard of the battle, under the immediate eye of you, my noble kinsman; and the foe shall learn to quail at the mingled names of a Maulerever and a Barnadiston."

The old Knight caught Albert in his arms. "Aye, boy, that shall they; and the day may come, when these pricked-eared Puritans, who are raising their heads so high in the land, shall fall before the sword of the Lord and

Gideon—as the knaves call it in their canting, blaspheming, hypocritical manner. O the singing rogues! how I long, whenever I hear their cursed twanging, nasal psalmody, to crop the ears of the villains!”

Albert made not any stay in London, beyond such as was absolutely necessary for the preparations of his journey; and having directed his retainers to pursue their homeward journey, under the charge of Will Thursby and Soame, he proceeded rapidly, accompanied by Conyers; and highly excited by the remembrance of the home of his boyish days—of his noble mother, and the beloved girl, who had won the first affections of his heart, he rode on with an impatience not to be controlled.

Autumn had shed her gorgeous mantle over the woodlands, which burst in beautiful array on the gladdened stranger, emerging from the level nakedness of the landscape of dreary plains into the richly cultivated and deep-wooded vale, which belts round the borders of

the three counties, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, and Essex—undisturbed by the tasteless and destructive genius of commerce, and reposing in the still and soothing silence of a sylvan solitude, save when the deep bells of the churches fling their holy summons through the echoing dells, or the merry Christmas peal swung on the night-wind, reverberates loudly from hamlet to town, startling with sweet melody the traveller wandering over the wide tract of the solitary plain. The mellowing tints, the deceitful and exaggerated glory that clothes in splendid colouring the falling honours of the luxuriant leaf—the admired, but mournful prelude of their everlasting decay, glowed richly under the departing beams of the setting sun, as Albert and Wilfred urged their weary steeds from the plain of Bottisham into the valley of Bradley; and except the hum of the wild bee, or the small hoose of some shrill insect, wandering from flower to flower, nought disturbed the calm repose of the pic-

turesque vale; and they beheld with joy, gliding through the enamelled meads, the streamlet of the Stour—the beloved rivulet of their boyhood, whose banks had often echoed their childish laugh—lave its bright wave in tribute through the fertile soil, circling round the holy pile of little Thurlow, dashing through the larger and kindred village of the same name—meandering on through the swampy soil of Wratting, and washing the base of the lordly turrets of Barnadiston Castle, till the accumulated stream poured its glad waters through the township and extensive domains of the once-famed De Clares, the warriors of the Red-hand, whose prowess in Palestine was the theme of song or story among the Osmanlis.

The night had fallen in when they reached the portal of Barnadiston Castle, and a shuddering feeling crept over Albert as he rode on through the deserted barbican, full into the resounding court-yard, without a single challenge. “What can this mean?” cried

the agitated youth, springing from his horse; “all is like the silence of the grave;”—and he darted into the deserted hall. His two faithful hounds sprung forward; licking the hand of their young lord, and eyeing him wistfully, they sat down before him, and began a long, low moan, such as may be heard at times in dead midnight from the dreadful dells of the lofty Alps,—the dirge of some favourite dog, the dumb, but fond and true friend of an unfortunate master. Albert stopped not, but rushing on through the sounding corridor, and up the central staircase, he burst full into his mother’s apartment. There a sight awaited him which realized all his fears. Stretched on the couch of death, his beloved mother, who had watched with a doating fondness over his infantine gambols, and had devoted a long widowhood to the care of his youth, and to the superintendence of his education—whose bosom contained no thought unconnected with her beloved Albert, lay in her last agony. The spa-

cious room was scarcely illumined by one large dim lamp, which threw an unearthly gleam over the ominous countenances and despairing looks of the group who surrounded the death-bed of the departing Christian. At the moment of the sudden entrance of Albert, Father Gaspardo was kneeling on one side of the bed, holding aloft, above the head of the once beautiful Lady Barnadiston, a richly wrought silver crucifix, and muttering the prayers that soothe the last moments of expiring humanity : the convulsive hands of the noble lady were clasped around the silver relic ; and the keen eyes of Gaspardo, upturned in beseeching supplication, as he slowly uttered the blessing at the conclusion of the confessional, while the lovely Mary, in a loose, negligent undress, with her dark hair flowing unfettered over her fair bosom, and shading her bedewed cheek, supported on her rounded sculptured-looking arm the sinking form of her beloved benefactress ; the old seneschal, the hoary-headed remnant of

three generations, leant against the foot of the bed in speechless woe, bowing the silvery honours of his head in trembling lowliness towards the couch ; and the loud sobs of the kind-hearted and honest old 'squire of the Barnadistons—the mental agony of stout Antony Conyers, echoed through the lofty-oaken carved ceiling of the dimly-lit chamber of death. Albert felt that sudden sickening of the heart which sometimes comes over us at an unexpected and horrible catastrophe ; and tottering a few paces, he leant against the wainscoted wall of the apartment, and groaned aloud in the agony of spirit.

A sudden energy appeared to nerve the dying lady in that awful moment, and crying aloud,—“ My Albert, it is my Albert ! my son, my son ! ” the distracted youth flung himself in passionate lamentation on the bosom of his much-loved and expiring parent. The Lady Barnadiston made a signal for all to quit the room, save Fa-

ther Gaspardo ; and putting her hand upon the auburn-haired luxuriant ringlets which curled on the head of Albert, she murmured the parent's blessing, and the prayer of the holy priest consecrated the affecting deed. Thrice she essayed to speak, but each time fell back in increasing faintness ; and at length, placing the hand of Albert on her heart, and drawing the crucifix near unto her bosom, she gazed alternately at the holy relic and at her beloved son ; and as the beautiful and aerial spirit passed away, a smile of deep satisfaction illumined for a moment the features of Lady Barnadiston, which in another second assumed all the rigidity and terrible deformity which announces the victory of the damp finger of Death ;—the silent destroyer, who rejoices in the day of battle, and presides often at the festive board,—whose cold hand graspeth the form of beauty in the mazy dance, or hurleth down in his pride the thoughtless and bold rider of the snorting steed—whose stealthy and noise-

less footstep treadeth the carpeted and gorgeous chambers of princes, and the lowly cot of the starving peasant—whose dread sceptre extendeth over the whole world, and swayeth creation in every element and clime; and whose dominion shall pass away only when the planets are arrested in their courses, and the orb of the earth shall roll once more into chaos and eternal night; when the Son of Glory shall erect a new kingdom, and the hallelujahs of millions of regenerated spirits shall chaunt in triumphant chorus the pæans over the everlasting fall of the Monarch of the Tombs!

CHAPTER IX.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismay'd,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down, the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.

DESERTED VILLAGE—GOLDSMITH.

DAYS passed away and still found Albert Barnadiston musing in melancholy solitude in the chamber of death. Hours would he sit unconscious of the presence of persons busied in the funereal preparations, and gaze with the fixt stare of absolute despair upon the mockery of the magnificent state which surrounded the cold and senseless corse of his adored parent.

Oftentimes would he seize the gaudy trappings which insulted the vanity of mortals with unseemly pageantry amidst the house of mourning, and throw them away with contempt. Albert was natural, and had the spirit to despise the absurd usages which have covered with ostentatious pomp and ridiculous state the inanimate clay, the perishing habitation of the immortal soul—the glorious mind which, from its high elevation, must look down and smile or weep at the useless honours offered to its abandoned prison-house. He was above signalling to the world his numerous ensigns of woe, and feeling that he had that within him “which passeth show,” he contemned the exhibition of all those absurd demonstrations, the emblems of grief, either of the “inky suit,” or the armorial hatchment. He who speaketh aloud a pompous sorrow, loseth the feeling with the words of utterance; but when tongued-tied, locked up within the secret recesses of the wonderful breast, the cankering worm feedeth on

the bloom of the countenance, and dimmest the lustre of the brilliant eye. It required all the soothing influence of Father Gaspardo to arouse Albert from the first sad sorrow with which he had become acquainted—the primal thorn that had pierced his bosom, the first sad shock which had dashed the imaginative glories of the world just opening on his view. But the natural elasticity of a youthful spirit, together with the unceasing attentions of the beloved friends of his early age, of the artless and devoted Mary, of the sympathizing and feeling Wilfred, together with the honest, though rough converse of old Antony Conyers, gradually recalled Albert from that deadly stupor into which he had fallen; but it was the departure of Mary Milbank, (to the cottage of old Soame,) who could no longer with propriety remain an inmate at the castle, that completely broke through the spell of sorrow which had fallen upon the Barnadiston.

Whether like the effect of one more potent

poison destroying the virulence of another, no sooner had the arrangements been completed for the departure of Mary to the cottage of Soame, to whose care Albert had consigned the precious charge of the orphan favourite of his mother, and the beloved mistress of his own affections, than the Barnadiston aroused himself to his wonted character. Taking the rounded and unresisting arm of the lovely girl under his own, he walked through the park to their favourite solitude along the banks of the winding stream of the Stour, beneath the frowning turrets of Barnadiston Castle, through the fertile vale where the priory of Kedington peered through the avenue of ancient trees above the village habitations that had nestled under the sacred protection of the holy precincts—a more sure safeguard in the rude times of Norman spoliation than the castle of a De Clare, or the armed valour of some Saxon thane.

Entering the grounds of the priory, Albert sought out the abode of Father Gaspardo, a

small but humble retreat, where the noble Italian, in recluse and honoured retirement, pored over the lore of bye-gone ages, and the mysterious and wonderful history of the primitive church. Gaspardo was deeply busied in the perusal of a parchment packet, stamped with the once all-powerful keys, the signet of the papal supremacy, whose dread decrees, once more tremendous than the magnates of the caliphs, undermining the thrones of mighty monarchs and the sceptres of the earth, were the sport and plaything of the robed and haughty priest, the sovereign pontiff of the superstitious and ignorant Christians. Gaspardo arose on the entrance of Lord Albert, and taking Mary by the hand, he led her to a seat, and pointing to a chair for the Barnadiston, he placed himself between the two, taking a hand of each.

“The time has approached,” said the venerable Father to Albert, “that I must arouse me from the tranquillity and peaceful tenor of the life which I have pursued for

many years, in obscurity, in happiness, and in deep study, amidst the cloisters of Kedington, and within the library of the old hall. I have received from our holy father, the head of our mother church, the ordinance to repair to Ireland (where the ancient and true worship is yet dear to that gallant people,) as the legate, to superintend the synods of our people, holden frequently at Kilkenny. Although personally unknown to Pope Urban, yet have I long corresponded with the papal see touching the affairs of this kingdom, and from my knowledge thereof, I have been chosen to uphold the interests of Rome in the sister island, which is like to be fiercely distracted by the bigoted oppression of the Established Church. I would have preferred to have passed the remainder of my days in the humble retirement of Kedington; but the rule and oath of our order, the wise bond imposed by the zeal and enthusiastic fervour of our founder, Ignatius Loyola, is to devote ourselves to the exaltation and spreading

of the Roman Church. To work ourselves into the secret councils of princes, and to sway the destinies of mighty empires—to advance the influence and renown of our order, we are taught to sacrifice every consideration; and when called forth, like an accomplished general, we are all supposed to know our duties. Years may pass away, my children—indeed life, perhaps—before we shall meet, and I would gladden my eyes with the betrothal of those whose virtues and whose beauties I have seen grow up from infancy.”

“Father,” said Albert, “it was my purpose, in seeking you here, to call you to witness the sacred vow which I would pledge to the lovely orphan charge of my noble mother. It were not fitting that Mary should continue at the castle, since Providence has deprived us of our common mother; and I have therefore engaged the venerable protection of old Soame to shield her until I may with propriety bring her home as my bride. Here, then, in

your presence, holy father, do I make the vow of —”

“Nothing!” cried the agitated, yet firm Mary, springing from her seat with the sudden elasticity and almost beautiful grace of a startled antelope. “You have ever been generous, Albert, and true; think you I will allow you to bind yourself by any vow, save the holy ceremonial which the church imposes? until then, your word is a sufficient guarantee, and I will not have my trust in you belied by the utterance of any rash oath. It shall be so—must it not, our holy father?” said the lovely girl, turning with a beseeching look to Father Gaspardo.

“Bless you, my children!” said the trembling and feeling old man, laying his hands on the heads of Albert and the lovely Mary, who flung themselves on their knees before him; “May the blessing of the great God come down upon you, and may such happiness as awaiteth the children of this world, fall to your share! You, Mary, have expressed

that confidence in Albert which is far more likely to bind a noble and generous mind than all the unmeaning vows, which are too often the mere lip earnestness of the moment. Cherish, my children, the affection which has grown up between you, and in the diffusion of the blessings of comfort among the poor peasantry who dwell around your stately abode, show your real gratitude for the happy state in which you shall find yourselves, by those acts of charity which are more treasured in heaven than all the vanity and ostentation that maketh a show to the world. Keep firm to the faith wherein ye have been taught, which, though it may be defaced by the errors and abuses that have crept over its ancient purity, is yet the true original worship—before whose mighty influence the elegant mythology of the Greeks vanished away, and the temples Delphi and Emesa were deserted, which felled the sacred groves of the Druids, and arrested the bloody sacrifice of Odin. Be not too curious regarding the various sects that

have sprung up under the magic talisman of reform, each and all claiming to be right, all believing the same great points, and differing only from each other by some absurd tricks, remarkable costume, or ridiculous ceremonies, fully as offensive as the vanities and pageantry which have injured the holy Roman church. Mankind have ever been, and will always be, prone to idolatries, and the eye or senses must be caught to keep up a devotion to any religion; the vulgar mind must be attracted by some impressive object, be it either the splendour and imposing ceremonial of Rome, or the canting and assumed inspired fervour of the Puritans; while the Anglican faith, even now in its infancy in this land, is only upholden by arbitrary decrees and stern magistracy, because it is devoid of some decided impressiveness. Every creed that has yet been delivered to mankind contains all the precepts of the highest morality—all subsequently lost under the gross idolatries encouraged by the priesthood. The Gueber, the

Brahmin, the Buddhist, and the Mahomedan, have the practice of every virtue strictly inculcated in their sacred books, and the doctrines of Buddha or Foh assimilate greatly with the teaching of our Saviour ; yet fire, the cow, the ape, and senseless tombs, are the only visible signs of the adoration of the people. Let your charities extend to all ; and believe that there are good and pious men of every faith, who worship God in the sincerity of their hearts after their way ; and after all, it is not probably the muttering of any particular form of prayer, but a contrite and sincere spirit, which can alone lead to the throne of grace. A good Catholic, who exercises to the best of his powers the noble qualities which have been given unto man, will be preferred before an indifferent Protestant ; and a sincere and benevolent sectarian will be called before a bigoted and fierce persecutor of our holy faith. Learn to look on mankind as one great brotherhood, all subject to infirmities, and all labouring equally under the influence of

vanity and delusive errors, intolerant to all who may choose to walk in a path deviating from their own imaginary perfections. In a few days I shall be honoured among a superstitious people as the delegate of the Vicar of Christ ; and the ancient and oppressed princes of the O'Neals, the O'Briens, and the Fitzadams, will be ready to fly to arms, with their wild and sanguinary followers, at the raising of my warning voice ; but, much as I would labour for the propagation of our faith, I would more study to avert the scenes of strife and bloodshed, that have stained for ages the face of one of the most beautiful countries of the earth. Since the usurpation of Strongbow and his Norman followers, and the subsequent conquest of the greatest of the Plantagenets, the second Henry, Ireland has been the oppressed soil of English intrusion ; and the lands of her old nobility have been given over as the spoil of the profligate courtiers of the sister island, who have derived from her fatness the prodigality which they

have wasted in the luxuriance of the English court ; and since the arbitrary reformation, the wealth of her diocesan establishment has been divided as a rich prey among the greedy churchmen of the new established faith, who are *purely purse-proud pastors*, sucking the *honey from the flocks*, who listen not to their unknown cries. The spirit of rebellion has ever been rife in that kingdom of misgovernment, and will ever be so, while the industry and labour of its inhabitants are taxed only to be expended on a foreign soil, and the poor cultivators are left to pine in solitary poverty, amidst the decay of their own abandoned desolateness. Ireland,” concluded Gaspardo in his earnest manner, “which might have been a garment of beauty to fair England, has been alienated by the vices of an oppressive misrule, and the flower that might have bloomed in radiant glory, hath pined away under the choking weeds which have poisoned its roots. Adieu, my orphan charge,” said he to Mary ;

“the days of happiness are before you, and may the arrows of misfortune never embitter the gentle tenor of your life. Unto you, Albert, I consign,”—placing the hand of the lovely Mary within that of the Barnadiston,—“to you do I with confidence assign the future care of this beautiful girl, the joy and adopted treasure of your noble mother’s heart.”

It was noon when Albert, with Mary, parting from Gaspardo, took the path down to the village of Kedington, through the long avenue of chesnut trees. The beautiful girl leant fondly on the arm of her lover in all the confidence of betrothed affection; joy was at her heart, and the beam of her deep blue eye glanced in lustral and endearing enchantment upon the manly countenance of Albert. They spoke of futurity, and the dreaming imagination of the ardent and enthusiastic lovers painted in bright colouring the uninterrupted happiness of a life of tranquillity and connubial felicity amidst the beloved scenes of their childhood,

surrounded by the familiar faces which had grown up with their youth, and whose lineaments had been stamped with the mark of manhood, or touched by the wand of beauty, almost under their immediate and daily gaze. In silent admiration they looked down upon the lowly but picturesque cots of the rural peasantry which *enamelled* in comfortable neatness the winding banks of the Stour, forming the clustering village of Kedington, in the shape of the mazy windings of the snake ; and as the western sun sunk behind the massy turrets of Barnadiston castle, darting his expiring rays in mellowing glory amidst the ocean of waving woods, the night vapour poured its blackening pall over the marshy meadows, and mixing with the curling smoke of the scattered cots, it ascended gradually, but perceptibly, above the higher grounds, wrapping in misty obscurity the dim towers, whose bold structure and marked outline showed like the fanciful form of some mighty *giant of Orion*, with his studded belt

and frowning aspect, palpable to the eye of the superstitious at times, amidst the fantastic clouds of heaven, when parting day dies amidst the waste of waters in the boundless Atlantic. The night fell in fast, and fearful of the air which breathes the blast of consumption on the fragile form of woman, Albert hastened down to the cottage of old Soame, who, with master Obadiah Fairlove, was piously employed in listening to the instructive volume of Holy Writ, which the gentle Alice, according to her wont, was reading prior to the evening meal. Seated on a low settle, almost at the small feet of Alice Soame, Wilfred Conyers, with his plumed cap balanced on his knee, and his dark raven hair scattered over his symmetrical shoulders, leant against the wall, his pale high forehead and chiselled features more peculiarly defined by the contrast blaze of a large reflecting wood fire. He sprung up on the entrance of Albert with all the agility and energy of an American savage, startling the humble group of the cottage, with "My

Lord Albert and Mistress Milbank : make room."

"It is not needed, Wilfred Conyers ; it is with pain I have disturbed the holy observances of family worship, but Alice and myself will soon be but as one daughter to this good old man," said the lovely Mary, taking the hand of old Soame ; "indeed, he has been long used to call us his children : have you not, Master Soame ?"

"Aye, bless you, my dear young lady ! and our poor people of the village have called you always their guardian angel, for your charities and benevolent spirit are the talk of every cottage hearth."

"Not more so, my good father, than those of your Alice : indeed, her discernment has always guided the little kind acts to the grateful peasantry, which have been much overprized."

"Thanks, Master Soame," said Lord Albert, "for your kindness to Mistress Milbank. She preferreth to reside in your humble cottage with

the early friend of her childhood, than to avail herself of the protection and countenance of some of my powerful kinsmen. Her happiness and comfort will be felt by me as an act of obligation.”

“That were alone sufficient,” said the old man, “to make us careful of Mistress Milbank’s comfort; but we have a still stronger claim, in the love we all bear to her for her own personal qualifications.”

In the meantime Mary retired to the room of Alice; and Wilfred Conyers, addressing himself to Albert, said, “My lord, have you yet seen the packet, with the royal seal, left by a messenger, arrayed in a sable suit, awhile since, within the vesper hour, with the seneschal of the castle? It is a courtly communication, my lord; and one, if I misjudge not, will require present answering.”

“If it so be, Wilfred, follow me to the castle, and give orders that my men be in readiness for a sudden departure. Adieu, my beau-

tiful Mary!" and Lord Albert impressed on the blushing cheek of Mary, who had re-entered the room, a kiss of fond affection—"Adieu, my Mary! I may be called suddenly away; but when we meet again, it shall be to lead you to the altar, to be decked as my bride."

The Barnadiston tore himself away, and hastened with Wilfred to the castle, where a packet, with the royal signet, bound with black tape, was delivered to him by the seneschal. He opened it, impatiently, and found a summons to take his seat among the Lords, in the Great Council of the Nation, assembled upon the occasion of the accession of the new King. "Wilfred," said Lord Albert, after the perusal of the packet, "let my followers be arrayed and ready for our departure by the morn. I would speak with your father, in the old library;—and yonder man, whom I passed, wrapt in the cloak, in the hall, what would he have?"

“He craves to speak in secret with you, my lord; but since your avowed feud with De Walden, it were not prudent to risk yourself alone with unknown and disguised persons.”

“I am not liable to fear, Wilfred; and methinks it were a mark thereof, did I, armed as is my wont, refuse to join conference with a single man; besides, saving Adrian de Walden, and his page Palikar, I scarcely think to have an enemy in the world. Let him of the cloak be admitted. Meanwhile, Wilfred, return hither speedily with your father.”

Albert walked slowly to the library, which scarcely showed a light, under the fading splendour of a summer's eve, darting its expiring twilight through the thick, diamond-cut, oriel windows, and painted glass, which surrounded the richly-carved gothic apartment. The young lord placed his plumed cap, with the white rose badge, upon the round table, and taking a pair of silver-mounted pistols from his girdle, he laid them beside his cap; and loosening the

mantle, which might have impeded the full sway of his arm, it fell from his shoulder on the thick tapestried carpet. Confident in his agility and personal courage, the Barnadiston stood in his own halls to receive the suspicious stranger, who might prove friend or foe ; and when the servant opened the door of the library, and the man of concealment advanced with a slow and stealthy step, casting suspicious glances around the dark room, the young lord waved his hand to the faithful servant, who yet held the open door in an agony of doubt, in sign of dismissal, and then demanded, in a firm tone, by whom he was honoured, and why in that disguise.

“ Not honoured, my lord, but rudely intruded on by one escaped from the outlaw’s cave, and disguised to evade the pursuit of the myrmidons of the law. Behold, my lord,” flinging off his Spanish cloak, “ the outlaw chief of Epping Chase, the once dreaded Walter, craves to be received into your honourable service ; not as

your immediate follower, for that might not well be ; but to stand on yon firm battlements, the soldier of the watch-tower, and one of the defenders of the castle of the Barnadiston."

"Willingly do I grant your request, Walter ; and now I bethink me, these pistols and this sword, which but a few moments since I thought to have been compelled to the use of, do I now freely bestow on you ; and sure am I they have fallen into hands which will ever grasp them firmly in the cause of gratitude. —Well, my honoured old master, and you, Wilfred, I suppose you have burst thus suddenly into the library, expecting to find me fallen beneath some murdering knife ; but such is not the usual wont of the bold English ; nor do I fear a solitary conference with any of our old people. Remember you not, Wilfred, the Sir Unknown of our Haverhill adventure ? He has taken service with me ; and it is my purpose, Master Anthony Conyers, that he stand in

command of the castle second only to yourself and Wilfred."

"Whatsoever my lord willeth, so shall it be done; and to confess the truth, the stranger hath the appearance of the proper man of the wars; and if need be, from his bearing, I doubt not but he will stand me in good stead to defend the leagued castle, if so be the fortune of war should threaten the proud towers of Barnadiston, which in the old feudal times have witnessed the discomfiture and flight of armed warriors along the plain; and to my dull thinking, the days are not distant, since the puritanical preachers have obtained such a sway over the minds of honest folk, that we shall be forced to point our roaring culverins to drown the war psalmodies of the ambitious sectarians. Anthony Conyers wants no more than a few faithful hands and stout hearts to keep the old banner of the Barnadiston floating proudly, despite the war-whoop of ten thousand soldiers of God, as these people impiously proclaim themselves.

But by what name are we to know our new lieutenant?" addressing himself to the outlaw.

"Walter have I been called," said the frank outlaw, "in the days of my evil deeds; but now that, through the goodness of Lord Albert, I am admitted to a trusty charge with honourable men, I shall throw away the needless disguise, and be known henceforth by the name of mine ancient family, the Biddulphs of Bignor—Henry Biddulph is my name."

"What, of the lineage of the bold Biddulphs of Sussex? Welcome are ye, young man, to the friendship of old Anthony Conyers; for well I know all of your name have firmly held to the faith of our ancient worship,—and let me tell you that is no small recommendation," casting a sorrowing look on Wilfred, who stood with his arms folded and his fine countenance cast down, as if in deepest contemplation; "it is no small recommendation with me to patter the *Ave Maria*, and to be satisfied with the confessional of the holy priest, when the mad

preaching of the puritanical ranters is dividing every house against itself, with their new-fashioned doctrines, all about antichrist and the Evil One. Od's blood! but Anthony Conyers is in no way a bloody-minded man; but well would it please me to cleave the tongues of these anointed saints, who are fast spreading mischief and disloyalty throughout fair England."

"Your spirit is uncharitable, father," said Wilfred, in a tone that startled the old man, who felt the ascendancy of his talented son, and knew himself to be no match for his earnestness and argumentative power; "there is, doubtless, abroad a spirit of fanaticism, which invariably carries its concomitant hypocrisy, let loose among the people; but the fervour of a new conversion is a fruitful garden of feelings, wherein the wild errors of sectarianism must take deep root; but yet even these, which time and the softening of passions must moderate, are preferable to the slavery, the eternal thralldom

of the mind, which the tyranny of Rome inflicts on all her subjects."

"Darest thou then," putting his hand on his sword, "tell me to my face, that thou hast abandoned the old faith of thy fathers? Away! go, join the tabernacles of the canting hypocrites, and let me try to forget that I once had a son!"

"Wilfred Conyers," said Albert, "I would not have this matter further urged; let all men act up to their conscience, and let us judge them by their deeds, and not by their creeds. It is natural that Master Conyers should think with the recollections of former years; and indeed, if we may be allowed to judge from events, the spirit of the Reformation has invariably introduced the anti-monarchical, and republican impulse into all the countries wherein it has made any progress, save among the northern Germans, who have, from the genius of the people, ever been wedded to the wise custom of kings or leaders. Let

Will Thursby and Soame be ready with the followers; to-morrow do we set out for the new court. You, Anthony Conyers, mine ancient master and trusty steward, will take charge of the castle, and, with Henry Biddulph, see to the disciplining of our rural tenantry. Should fate involve these fair realms in the tumult of civil war, it must be heard of, that the castle of the Barnadiston held out long and stoutly in the cause of our King. We shall take Father Gaspardo along with us, and I would have you greet him from me, Wilfred, that I freely bestow the ambling pony of my lamented mother for his use, not only for this present journey, but for ever; and it is a gift I would bestow on no other, but Gaspardo is entitled to much more than I can ever repay."

The old 'squire, with Wilfred and Henry Biddulph, as we must henceforth style our outlaw, retired from the library, leaving the young lord to his meditations, amidst the silent gloom of the finely-carved oaken apartment,

scarcely illumined by the faint soft light, emitted by the silver lamp, which had been trimmed by the silent attendant. "Strange," soliloquized Albert, as he paced the noble room, "instant attendance, and the offer of the assured friendship of Buckingham, who treats with me on the footing of an equal. True I am so, but yet the affronts he has put on the highest and sagest of the land, putteth an air of condescension on this his proposal to a young and inexperienced peer. It must be for some answerable end. And with De Walden too, my professed and implacable foe, for his chief counsellor and friend; aye, the Achithophel to our English Absalom. There must be some deep design hidden under this fair surface; but beware ye, my lord of Buckingham. I will be made no tool to thy crooked policy, and if I do not err, you will be called to a high account by my friend, Lord Bristol, for your part in the business of the Spanish match. The

King, my sovereign liege, favoureth Buckingham; but yet it cannot be that such a vain gaudy puppet shall long rule over the destinies of this mighty nation. De Walden, had he virtue, and had he honesty, might uphold the impetuous and mercurial Buckingham with his secret counsels; but the favourite is the child of impulse, and the demon spirit of De Walden would rejoice malignantly over the fall of his friend and patron. O that the lofty and ennobling stamp of genius should too often be impressed upon souls, black, with the venom of the serpent's coil, who, with syren voice and commanding capacity, spell-bind the faculties and affections of mankind, only to betray them to their ruin, and mock at their miseries and weaknesses—permitted by Providence, for some inscrutable purpose, to wear the form of angels, while they enact the part of devils upon the earth. De Walden is my foe, but so much do I admire his superior intellectual powers, that

I would give the fairest half of my possessions, could I, by some misrule, render his nature honest, and call him my trusted friend. No, it cannot be; the atom of animosity of that man to me, is but a particle of his general hatred to the human race; and, like the tyrant Roman emperor of the olden day, he would exult in the sweeping blow of vengeance which should exterminate mankind, and would gloat in horrid triumph over the convulsive groans of the expiring lords of the world. Is such a one fit to live? No. Worse is he than the solitary murderer, for his deep villany impels the dagger of despair into many a confiding and generous breast, and his unchecked and fearful career sacrifices hecatombs of his fellow creatures at the shrine of his passions; and the talented monster uses every weapon, from the seductive wine cup to the exciting table of the gambler. The voice of ambition, the pang of jealousy, the sting of fearful remorse, the canker of envy, and the fierce burst of revenge;

all these are touched and played upon as the notes of a different instrument, by a skilful hand, and adopted to plunge the unconscious victims of hatred into the depths of agony. The warning voice of the sufferings that await the sinner, in the never-ending immortality of a future life, the laws of man, cannot touch the wretch who thus feeds on their weaknesses; and his death, which would be a general benefit to society, must be expiated by the blood of their best friends.

“So must it ever be. The offender, in defiance of the law, must be immolated at the call of justice. The villain! the secret murderer within the prescribed pale of the law, may go on unpunished, nay, often applauded, in his cursed career. De Walden, safe in his talent, in his craft, in his temper, may practise upon the passions of hundreds, till he hunts them to the death.

“Such is the state of mankind, like the voracious pike, which destroys its own species;

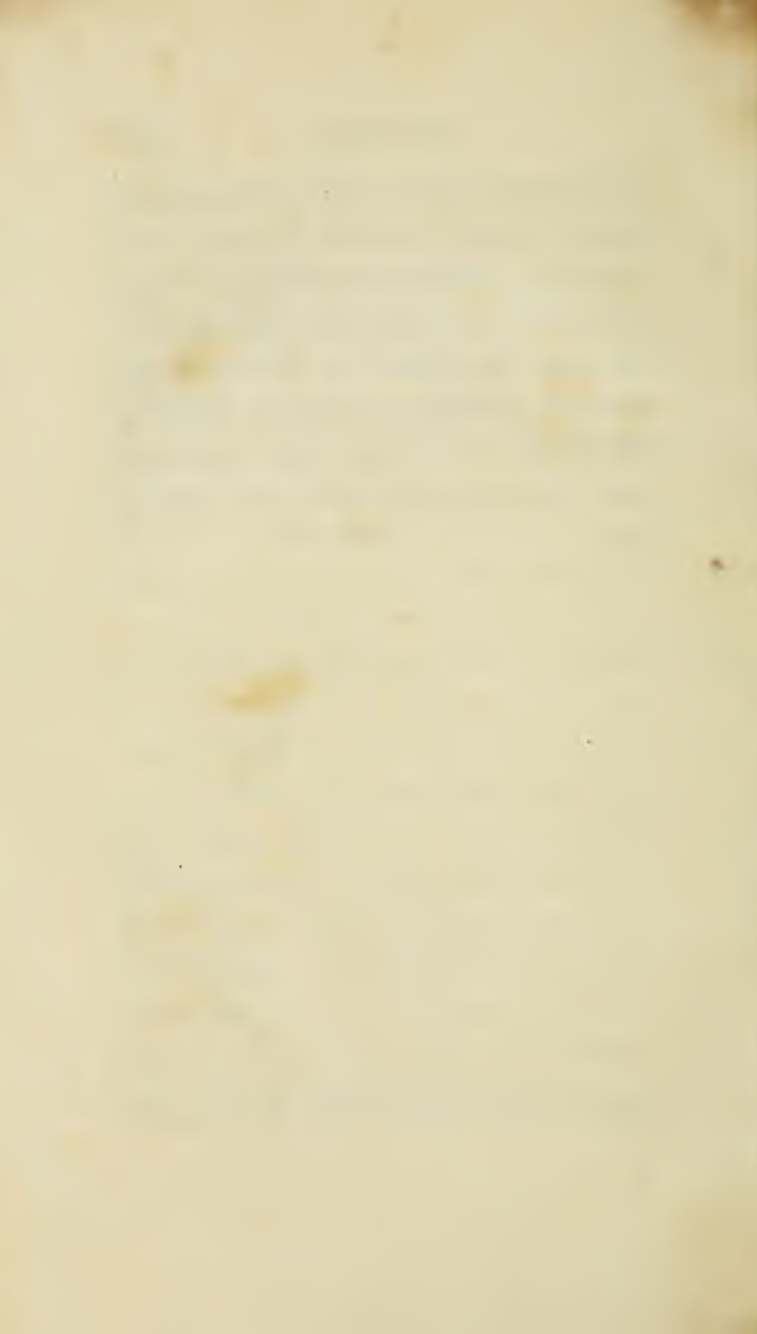
so do the bold, able, and unprincipled among men, greedily eat the bread, bedewed with the tears of the dupes of their villany. Strange, amidst the volumes of the sages of antiquity, and of the mighty minds, the regenerators of civilization in barbaric Europe, who have touched with the hand of masters the fine chords of the human breast, and who have handed down the hundred sublime systems of legislature, there have been none that have been able to frame any law to arrest the career of the designing and talented villain; and saving his own conscience, (a small voice too often silenced, till the last fatal hour, when it sounds to the startled heart the alarums of eternal punishment,) there is no moral obligation sufficiently strong to consign the accomplished and dangerous villain to present infamy and future disgrace. No," continued Albert in his soliloquizing mood, "it must not be that I again trust myself with Adrian de Walden; like the spotted panther, he is splendid in ap-

pearance, but at any moment he may spring upon his incautious admirer. So must it be. I will obey this summons, but when I tread the same path with my Lord of Buckingham, I will walk cautiously, and with suspicious footsteps." And placing the packet within his folding vest, Lord Albert sought that couch, where "joy subsides, and sorrow sinks to sleep."

END OF VOL. I

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